

# Dulcimer Players News

\$5.00  
Vol. 22, No. 3

The Journal for Hammered and Fretted Dulcimer Enthusiasts  
August, 1996–October, 1996

Our 22nd  
Anniversary Year



## ***Inside:***

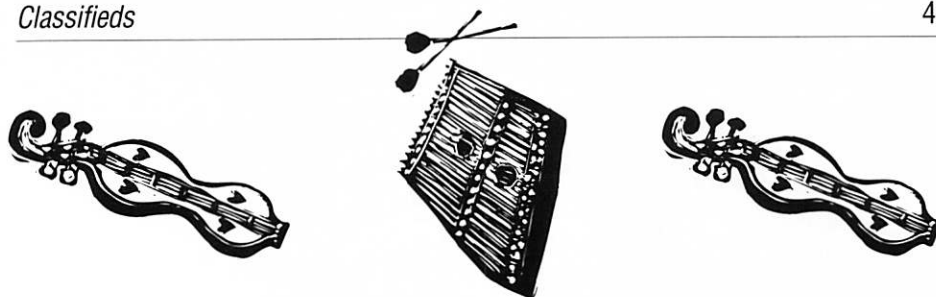
- ***Tips for the beginning performer***
- ***What makes a good ensemble?***
- ***Meet:  
Magical Strings  
George Haggerty  
Sally Hawley  
Judy Ireton***
- ***Caring for your hammered dulcimer***
- ***Dulcimers in Cyberspace,  
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## Dulcimer Players News

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August 1996–October 1996  
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**Ralph Lee Smith**

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**Carrie Crompton**

Euro Tunes  
**David Moore**

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**Rosamond Campbell**  
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### The Dulcimer Players News

is published four times each year. Issues are mailed (via 3rd class) to subscribers in January, April, July and October. Subscriptions in the United States are \$18 per year, \$33 for two years. Canada: \$21 per year (US funds). Other countries (surface mail): \$22 (US funds). In the United States a reduced price of \$15 (suggested) is available for people who are unable to pay the full subscription price because of financial difficulties. Recent back issues are usually available. Cost per back issue is \$500 in the US (includes postage).



**R**ecently on an advisory project for the Virginia Commission for the Arts, I read over fifty extensive grant proposals. Though they were well-written and obviously often reviewed by the writer(s), I still bumped into numerous typos. In the booklets accompanying my recordings, so far I've found one typo, one ill-placed and unnecessary comma, and (horrors!) one misplaced location for a tune. I won't tell you where to look to find my follies, but I will tell you that I proof read copy over and over. And yet...

Not long ago I performed for people I've known for years. This wasn't my first performance for them either, but, there on the poster, in bold print, was Madeline McNeil instead of MacNeil. I'm often McNeil. When my great-grandfather came from Scotland to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, his name was Daniel McNeil. People, I guess, continually want me to revert back to my roots.

Which brings up my good friend Lois Hornbostel, who ended up "Hornbostle" on the cover and the contents page of the May-July 1996 DPN. I've known her for at least twenty years, and have written her name countless times. Guess who proof read the cover *and* the contents page? At least her name was spelled correctly in the article.

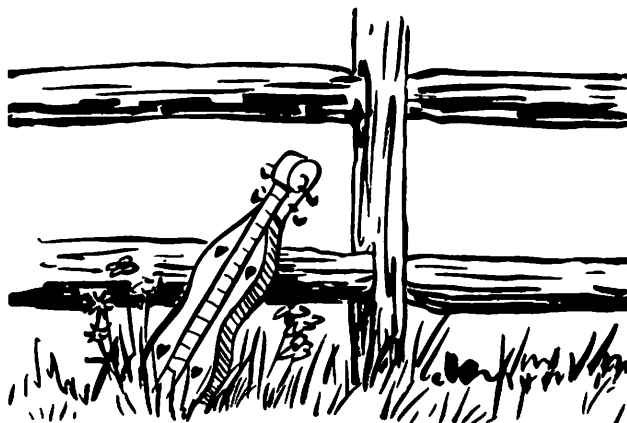
Although this issue of DPN will be read and reread by several staff members, you'll probably find at least one typo that can be laid at my feet. So, never expect to be offered a free subscription to *Dulcimer Players News* for any mistakes you discover. I may be humble, but I'm not naive.

Events coordinators, please check the revised Deadlines information at the beginning of that column. We've changed the guidelines for inclusion in each issue, modifying the Events database to catch some festivals which should have been (or should not have been) listed in a particular issue.

There are plans afoot for special issues; the first one might be in the fall. These are exciting for us and, we hope, interesting for you. In the meantime, there are lots of festivals to attend and music to be played. Enjoy the rest of your summer!

In harmony,

*Madeline MacNeil*



## NETWORKING

**Closing dates for the  
Nov 1996 - Jan 1997 DPN**  
(To be mailed to subscribers by  
October 10th)

Information for News &  
Notes, Letters, Music  
Exchange, etc: August 5th

**Classified Ads: August 5th**

**Display Ads: August 5th**  
(space reservation), August  
15th (camera-ready copy)

### Ad Prices

**Classified Ads:**  
45¢ per word. 4 issues paid in  
advance without copy changes:  
20% discount.

### Display Ads:

1/12 page \$30   1/6 page \$60  
1/4 page \$90   1/3 page \$120  
1/2 page \$175   Full page \$350

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Outside back cover (½ page)  
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recordings.*

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responsible for their eventual fate.  
The DPN reserves the right to edit  
all manuscripts for length and clarity.  
The opinions expressed therein  
are not necessarily those of the  
Dulcimer Players News.*

### Technical Dulcimer questions

Sam Rizzetta  
PO Box 510  
Inwood, WV 25428

**News and Notes, Letters,  
Events, Clubs**  
Dulcimer Players News  
PO Box 2164  
Winchester, VA 22604

### What's New and Reviews

Carrie Crompton  
11 Center Street  
Andover, CT 06232







## Letters to Us

### Dear DPN:

I thought I would relate a little tale that DPN had a direct influence on.

In about 1974 I was antique shop browsing in Mississippi when I came upon a small wooden traveling secretary — essentially a small traveling letter box. I bought it on the spot. The box had been with a lot of furniture that had been bought in and shipped from England.

A few months later I moved to Oklahoma and, during a dry spell, realized that my little box rattled when I moved it. On closer examination and with much working and soft prying on old varnish, I discovered that the box had a small drawer in the bottom. Inside I found a small treasure of papers, a glass picture negative, some piano repair receipts from the late 1800's, and some

report cards from two sisters who were in school in 1954. There were also several photos and letters dating back to the early 1900's. In essence, the drawer contained the sort of things kept to remind one of family and children. They were packed so tight that they made no noise until the day I moved the secretary.

All of the items had names and dates that indicated they came from the area of Fareham, England, but I had no real addresses. The dates were so old that I really did not think I could ever find out who the items had belonged to. So about twenty years passed.

Last year I was in a fix. I had the music to a tune I was learning on my mountain dulcimer but I could not find the words. I placed a query in DPN's Music Exchange column requesting words for "Little Beggar Man," and received several responses. One response came from Geoff Gough in Horsham, England. Out of curiosity, I looked up Horsham on a map and, much

to my surprise, I found out it is just down the road from Fareham! I wrote to Mr. Gough, telling him the story of my little box, and he said he would contact someone in Fareham for me.

A few weeks went by. I came home one day and found a message on my answering machine from a lady in England who said that she believed the box belonged to her grandmother. A friend of Mr. Gough's had run a story in the local Fareham paper and the solicitor (lawyer) of the family I was looking for saw the story and contacted the family.

I later contacted Betty Slater, whose mother had originally owned the box. Betty was one of the girls whose report cards I had. She told me about her days at school with her sister, who died not long after those days at the age of eight. I learned that the glass negative was a photo of Betty's grandmother. I sent all of the papers and items in the box to Betty and am making arrangements to send the secretary to one of Betty's daughters.

*Dulcimer Players News* played a major part in returning a bit of a family's history back to England after a twenty-year odyssey. Thank you!

Paul Bostick

Stillwater, Oklahoma

### Dear DPN:

John Reaugh of Apollo, Pennsylvania passed away in January after a brief illness. John loved playing the dulcimer and guitar with his group One More Time. He was an excellent dulcimer player who started after receiving a kit from a relative. After that first dulcimer, he made many more, mainly for family and friends.

One of the people John met through *Dulcimer Players News* is Eric Leffingwell, who lives in Oregon. They met when John answered a request Eric made in Music Exchange. From that time one, they talked on the phone many times about building ideas and the places and groups they each played for. They even sent local woods to each other for their building projects.

Our music group misses him dearly.

Mary Ellen Stoops

Vandergrift, Pennsylvania

### FROM ROSAMOND CAMPBELL FOR FRETTED DULCIMER



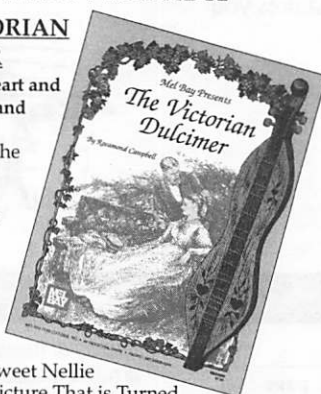
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Rosamond Campbell, 1037 Central Ave., Wilmette, IL 60091



**Dear DPN:**

We've formed a new club in Macon, Georgia! [Look for the information in the Clubs Column.] We didn't mess around in picking a name. We went first class; we're called the Mountain Dulcimer Philharmonic. We're a class act, wearing Black Tie and jeans.

We meet at the new Music Hall of Fame building which is really something. Displays are planned to span all types of music. Among other things on display, there will be one of my dulcimers and dulcimer-parts showing construction techniques. Maybe you dulcimer pros might want to have a festival there or something. It's a great multi-zillion-dollar building right in downtown Macon.

I want to get a bunch of cardboard dulcimers, or other inexpensive dulcimers, for children who visit the Hall of Fame. They can play "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" or something on the spot, having something great to tell their moms and dads when they get home.

Thank you for your wonderful work on DPN. You have opened a whole new wonderful world for a 64-year-old artist/craftsman.

*John Stockard*  
Milledgeville, Georgia

**Dear DPN:**

Recently I began learning to play the mountain dulcimer and this past summer attended my first jam session. It was a heck of a lot of fun. Some of the tunes I knew how to play, but several were not familiar to me. It occurred to me that there must be a core of tunes that would most likely be played at any jam. If one could identify what they are and concentrate on learning to play them, it would increase enjoyment and better prepare anyone taking part.

I shared this idea with the Old-Time Repertoire classes at Augusta's Spring Dulcimer Week. Following is an alphabetical listing of the twenty jam tunes for dulcimer most identified by them. It should be noted that this list would

probably vary from region to region.

Perhaps some enterprising individual could build on this effort and develop an instruction book based on most commonly-encountered jam tunes.

The list: Angeline The Baker, Arkansas Traveler, Bile Them Cabbage Down, Chinese Breakdown, Flop-Eared Mule, Golden Slippers, I'll Fly Away, Liberty, Liza Jane, Mississippi Sawyer, Old Joe Clark, Over The Waterfall, Ragtime Annie, Red Wing, Shortnin' Bread, Simple Gifts, Soldier's Joy, Westphalia Waltz, Whiskey Before Breakfast, Wildwood Flower.

*Ben Poscover*  
Towson, Maryland



## News & Notes

**The West Virginia Mountaineer Dulcimer Club** will celebrate their 25th anniversary at a meeting open (free) to the public on September 21st. Read the Events Column for more information. Congratulations to this group, which counted Russell Fluharty, Ray Epler and Worley Gardner as members, for its dedication to West Virginia's and the dulcimer's musical heritage.

Winners at the **Southern Regional Dulcimer Championships** at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Arkansas (April 26-27, 1996) are: Mountain Dulcimer • 1st, Josh Cooper, Tulsa, OK; 2nd, Linda Brockinton, Alexander, AR; 3rd, Hollis Landrum, Vicksburg, MS. Hammered Dulcimer • 1st, Peggy Carter, Spring, TX; names of 2nd and 3rd place winners unavailable at press time. Dulcimer Ensemble • 1st, Larry Conger, Paris, TN, and Jim Curley, Shawnee, KS; 2nd, Bill & Sharon VanDusen, Hale, MO; 3rd, Jeff Jenkins Railroad Duo, Bebe, AR. Congratulations to all. 🎵

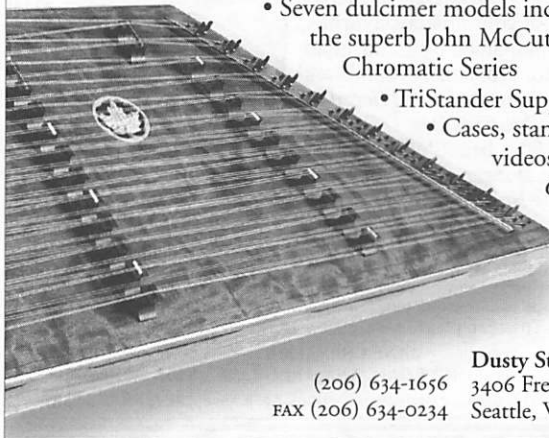
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## Dulcimer Clubs

### New Dulcimer Clubs

#### Georgia

*Mountain Dulcimer Philharmonic*

John Stockard  
3686 Sussex Drive  
Milledgeville, GA 31061  
912/452-5713  
1st Sundays

#### Illinois

*Mississippi River Dulcimer Connection*

Jean Murray  
2046 Broadway  
Quincy, IL 62301  
217/223-5587

#### Michigan

*Bay Area Dulcimer Society*  
Judith Lindenau  
7707 Fouch Rd.  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
616/935-4962 fax947-1910  
1st Wednesdays, 3rd Sundays

#### Texas

*Picks & Hammers*  
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Rt. 1 Box 123A  
Grandview, TX 76050  
Home: 817/854-2899  
Work: 817/645-0940  
1st Sundays

*Houston Area Music Society*

Peggy Carter  
16142 Hexham Drive  
Spring, TX 77379  
713/370-9495

### Updated Dulcimer Clubs

#### Indiana

*Southern Hollow Dulc. & Folk Group*  
Clara Cureton  
929 Stewart Ave.  
Evansville, IN 47715  
812/476-3493  
Every Tuesday

#### North Carolina

*The Calabash Dulcimer Players*  
Mary Clute  
3 Arden Court  
Calabash, NC 28467  
910/579-8387

#### Pennsylvania

*Welsh Mountain Dulcimer Club*  
Nick Platco  
228 Maplewood Dr.  
Pottstown, PA 19464  
610/326-2992  
2nd Tuesdays (Sept.-June)



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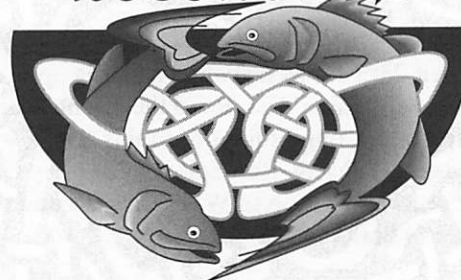
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## Music Exchange

■ I am looking for the sheet music or recording of "The Mystic Dream" by Loreena McKennett, produced by Warner.

*Yoli Jolliff*  
PO Box 348  
Irving, IL 62051

■ I would like to find a dulcimer in Ireland.

*Olivier Salaun*  
2 bis, rue des Bleuets  
22190 Plerin  
France

■ I am looking for dulcimer players in my area.

*Shelia Shafer*  
208 W. Elm St., Apt. B  
Jefferson City, MO 65101  
sshafer@services.state.mo.us

■ I am looking for mountain dulcimer music books that contain songs in FAC tuning. I learned about the FAC tuning at a workshop in Boone, NC and have been unable to find any tunes.

*Nick Platco*  
228 Maplewood Dr.  
Pottstown, PA 19464

■ I am a member of the Australian Association of Musical Instrument Makers and have constructed five Appalachian dulcimers and one hammered dulcimer as well as other instruments. I only have drawings of a 9/8 hammered dulcimer and am interested in obtaining a full detailed drawing of a 12/11. I would like to correspond with someone who is interested in constructing and playing dulcimers.

*Fred J. Kingshott*  
19/470 Pine Ridge Rd.  
Coombah, Gold Coast, 4216  
Queensland, Australia



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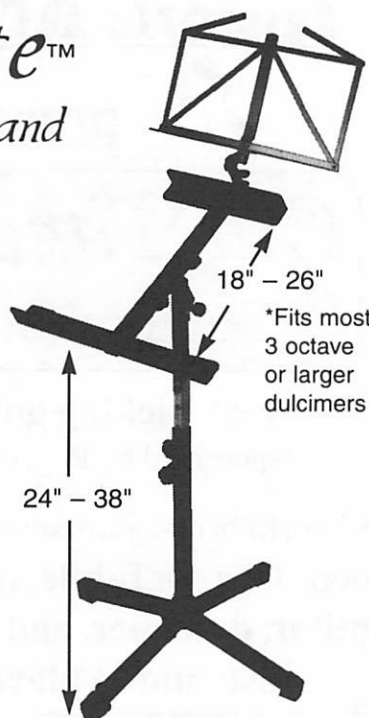
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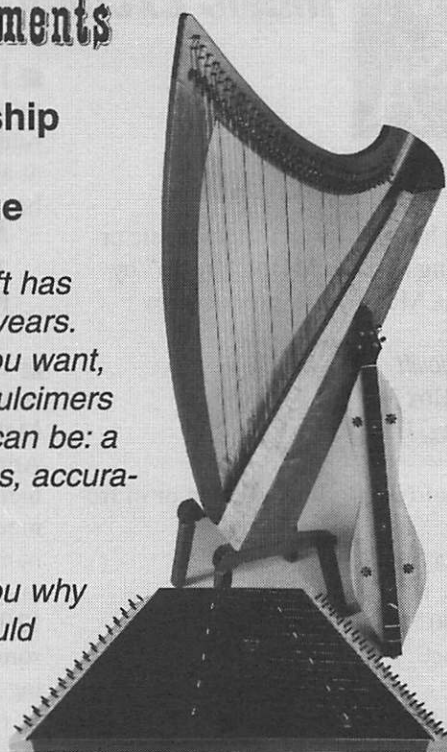
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## Events

### August 4 • Lake Zurich, IL

#### 2nd Annual Lake County Folk Festival.

Workshops, children's stage and activity area, crafts, vendors, concessions.

Includes the Lake Zurich area dulcimer stage. Info: B.A. Perry, 538 Dublin Dr., Mundelein, IL 60060.

### August 9–12 • West Dover, VT

**Dulcimer Daze.** Open stage, workshops and concerts. Info: Folk Craft Music, PO Box 1572, Wilmington, VT 05363. 802/464-7450.

### August 10–11 • Salem, WV

**Dulcimer Weekend at Fort New Salem,** (a nineteenth-century West Virginia settlement), features workshops (hammered and mountain), concert, and jamming. Info: Carol Schweiker, Fort New Salem, Salem-Teikyo University, Salem, WV 26426. 304/782-5245.

### August 15–18 • Marshall, NC

**Tao of Dulcimer Retreat.** Combining T'ai chi and other Taoist focusing, relaxation techniques and how to apply them to playing the lap dulcimer. Info: Don Pedi, Rt. 6, Box 214B, Marshall, NC 28753. 704/689-9126.

### August 16–18 • Brasstown, NC

#### Workshop: Beginning Mountain Dulcimer.

Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC 28902. Telephone 800/365-5724.

### August 23–25 • Midland, MI

**Dulcimer, Bluegrass, Old Car, Antique Engine & Folk Music Gathering.** Jamming, workshops, vendors, concerts and dance. Camping available on site. Info: Bill Kuhlman, 2769 S. Homer Rd., Midland, MI 48640. 517/835-5085.

### August 25–31 • Brasstown, NC

#### Workshop: Intermediate Mountain Dulcimer.

Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800/365-5724.

### Aug 26–Sept 2 • Avoca, IA

**Old-Time Country Music Contest and Festival.** Contests and workshops for hammered and mountain dulcimers among many other instruments at the Pottawattamie County Fairgrounds. Camping available. Info: Bob Everhart, PO Box 438, Walnut, IA 51577. 712/784-3001.

### September 8–14 • Brasstown, NC

**Hammered Dulcimer Workshop** for beginners. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC 28902. Telephone 800/365-5724.

### September 13–15 • Shepherdstown, WV

**Upper Potomac Dulcimer Festival.** Annual hammered dulcimer festival, featuring classes at all levels, open mike and a concert. Info: Joanie Blanton, Box 1474, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. 304/263-2531.

### Sept 13–14 • Jackson, MS

**Central Mississippi Dulcimer Festival.** Covered dish supper, workshops, concerts, open stage, cookout, hayride, jamming. Info: Robert Box, P.O. Box 275, Flora, MS 39071. 601/879-8374. Email: 73547.1532@CompuServe.com. See ad on page 9.

### September 14–15 • Cooksburg, PA

**Sawmill Great Dulcimer Round-Up.** Classes for all levels of mountain and hammered dulcimers. Concerts, sales, open stage, jamming, demonstrations, and hymn fest. Info: Marilyn Karns, Dulcimer Festival, CFSCA, PO Box 180, Cooksburg, PA 16217. Enclose SASE for brochure.

### September 14 • Winfield, KS

**Winfield Warm-Up Picnic,** sponsored by the Great Plains Dulcimer Alliance. Open to anyone interested in acoustic music: instrumentalists, listeners, singers, cloggers, etc. Workshops, jamming, picnic and evening open mike. Info: Mike Huddleston, 6622 W. 35th St. So., Wichita, KS 67215. 316/524-0997.

## EVENTS CALENDAR DEADLINES

### February–April issue:

Events from 1st weekend of Feb. through the 2nd weekend of May

**Deadline:** November 1st

### May–July issue:

Events from 1st weekend of May through Labor Day weekend  
This is our largest yearly calendar

**Deadline:** February 1st

### August–October issue:

Events from the 1st weekend of Aug. through the 2nd weekend of Nov.

**Deadline:** May 1st

### November–January issue:

Events from the 1st weekend of Nov. through the 2nd weekend of Feb.

**Deadline:** August 1st

### September 15 • Huntsville, AL

**Mountain Dulcimer Festival.** Performances, jam sessions, sales booths at Burritt Museum and Park. Handicapped accessible; camping available nearby. Info: Al Bell, PO Box 1823, Huntsville, AL 35807. 205/851-0731

### September 19–22 • Winfield, KS

**Walnut Valley Festival.** Features national contests on hammered and mountain dulcimer, finger-pick and flat-pick guitar, mandolin, fiddle, banjo and auto-harp. Workshops, concerts, all-night jams, and arts & crafts fair. Info: Bob Redford, PO Box 245, Winfield, KS 67156. 316/221-3250. See ad on page 8.

### September 20–21 • Pineville, KY

**Great American Dulcimer Convention** featuring workshops on mountain and hammered dulcimers plus concerts. Info: Pine Mountain State Resort Park, 1050 State Park Rd., Pineville, KY 40977. 800/325-1712.

### September 20–22 • Buckeye Lake, OH

**Harmony Harvest Campout** at Buckeye Lake KOA with Standing Stone Strings & Things club of Lancaster. Workshops, jamming, bean dinner, Sunday hymn sing. Info: Michael Oliver, 152 East Fair Ave., Lancaster, OH 43130. 614/653-0917.

*continued on next page*

**September 17 • Mannington, WV**  
**WV Mountaineer Dulcimer Club Fall Meeting** featuring jamming, pot luck lunch, open stage, celebration of club's 25th anniversary. The public is invited at no charge. Info: Patty Looman, 1345 Bitonti St., Star City, WV 26505. 304/599-5343.

**Sept 21-22 • Coshocton, OH**  
**Old Time Music Festival** featuring 19th century music and instruments. Workshops, jam sessions, and open stage for players of fiddles, mandolins, guitars, dulcimers and other acoustic instruments. Info: Roscoe Village Foundation, 381 Hill St., Coshocton, OH 43812. 800/877-1830. See ad on page 6.

**September 22-28 • Brasstown, NC**  
**Workshop: Beginning Mountain dulcimer.** Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800/365-5724.

**September 26-28 • Memphis, TN**  
**Memphis Dulcimer Festival**, featuring performances and workshops on hammered and mountain dulcimers, autoharp, etc. Info: Memphis Dulcimer Festival, 95 N. Evergreen St., Memphis, TN 38104. 901/725-6976.

**September 27-29 • New Milford, CT**  
**Housatonic Dulcimer Celebration** offers a weekend of workshops in mountain and hammered dulcimers, vendors, concerts, and more. Info: Housatonic Dulcimer Celebration, P.O. Box 2024, New Milford, CT 06776. 860/567-8262 or 203/266-7560. See ad on page 6.

**September 28 • Dana Point, CA**  
**Harvest Festival of Dulcimers**, featuring workshops, concerts, and jamming for players of hammered and fretted dulcimers. Info: So. California Dulcimer Heritage, PO Box 69, Bonsall, CA 92003. 714/646-1964. See ad on page 9.

**September 29 - October 4 • Brasstown, NC**  
**Workshop: Continuing Mountain Dulcimer.** Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800/365-5724

**October 4-6 • Montgomery, AL**  
**Montgomery Dulcimer Players' Festival** Ft. Toulouse-Jackson Park. Jamming, beginners workshop, open stage. Camping available. Info: Mike Manley, 761 Summer Ln., Prattville, AL 36066. 334/365-4356.

**October 6-12 • Brasstown, NC**  
**Hammered Dulcimer Workshop** for intermediates. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800/365-5724.

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**October 11-13 • St. Petersburg, FL**  
**Sunshine State Acoustic Music Camp** features classes for players of Appalachian dulcimer, hammered dulcimer, guitar, mandolin, autoharp and other acoustic instruments. Limited enrollment. Some single day rates. Info: Charley Groth, PO Box 668, Crystal Beach, FL 34681. 813/784-1771 (before 10 p.m.).

**October 12 • Tulsa, OK**  
**10th Not-Quite-Annual ITDC Dulcimer Day.** Workshops for mountain and hammered dulcimer plus afternoon and evening concerts. Info: Indian Territory Dulcimer Celebration, P.O. Box 471532, Tulsa, OK 74147. 918/744-8236.

**October 13-19 • Brasstown, NC**  
**Workshop: Beginning to Intermediate Mountain Dulcimer.** Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800/365-5724.

**October 19, 1996 • Leominster, MA**  
**Mt. Dulcimer/Guitar Daye Workshops** for

beginner and advanced. Jam with instructors, concert at night. Bring instrument. Info: send SASE to Ruth Harnden, 58 Hickory Rd., Leominster, MA 01453.

**November 1-3 • Mobile, AL**  
**Deep South Dulcimer Assn. Festival.** Concerts, open stage, workshops. Held at Chickasabogue Park. Camping available. Info: Carlene Brown, 13500 Forts Lake Rd., Pascagoula, MS 39581. 601/474-2412

**November 1-3 • East Troy, WI**  
**Stringalong Weekend.** Concerts, workshops, singing and dancing at Edwards Conference Center. Dulcimer activities. Bring or rent an instrument. Info: UMW Folk Center, Ann Schmid, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. Phone 800/636-FOLK (3655). See ad on this page.

**November 2 • Providence, RI**  
**Mountain Music in the Ocean State,** a mini-festival of old-time music and workshops on ballad singing, mountain

dulcimer, old-time banjo, and fiddle. Concerts. Info: Aubrey Atwater, PO Box 204, Hope, RI 02831. 401/826-7743.

**November 9 • Elizabethtown, KY**  
**Heartland Dulcimer Fall Festival.** Workshops for mountain dulcimer, harmony singing, vendors. Info: Lorinda Jones, P.O. Box 123, Rineyville, KY 40162. 502/862-9747.

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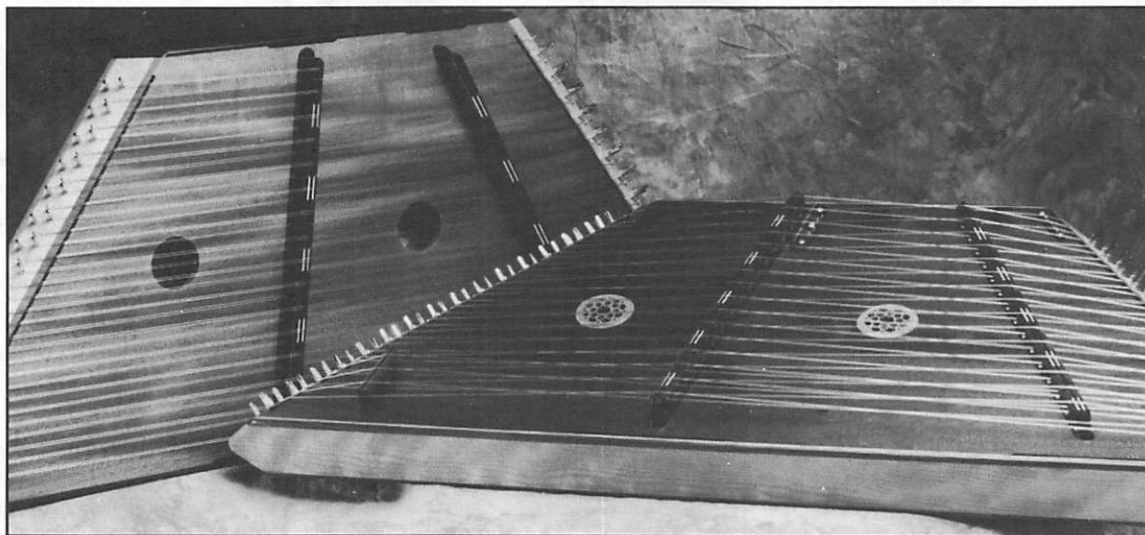
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## Technical Dulcimer

by Sam Rizzetta

*In the May-July DPN Sam discussed the care and maintenance of the fretted dulcimer. We continue now with the hammered dulcimer.*

**F**or those of us who are hammer dulcimer aficionados, some of the same maintenance items apply. Again, cracks in the back or soundboard may be more cosmetic than structural. But have them checked out. Cracks in the sides are more often a warning sign on the highway to the great dulcimer scrap yard. But the most important maintenance item on your hammer dulcimer check list is tuning! Check tuning regularly against a tuning standard, like a tuning fork, pitch pipe, or electronic tuner. If the whole instrument goes very flat, it may take a lot of tuning and retuning to get it to hold pitch again. If the whole instrument goes very sharp, which can happen with the change of seasons or climatic conditions, strings may break, the instrument may warp, or joints may fail because of the added stress. A hammer dulcimer which slips to a half-tone sharp may be over stressed by a significant amount. Some dulcimers will take this and some will not. Do you know which yours is? Will this void the warranty? Do you know where your dulcimer is when it stays out late at night?

I admit to treating my dulcimers in a somewhat cavalier manner. But I pay attention to tuning and the attendant stresses. Of course, if I trash one dulcimer I can step into my workshop and pick a new one off the shelf or quickly build another. That's not an option for everyone.

As with our little friends, the fretted dulcimers, inspection is a very important part of hammer dulcimer maintenance. Look the instrument over periodically. Look for changes of any sort as well as warps, cracks, loose joints. Not all of these are bad problems. But let the builder or repair guru

check it out and help you decide if action is required.

Hammer dulcimer problems often manifest themselves in tuning, so look for tuning changes. Loose tuning pins are easily repaired. A piece of monofilament fishing line placed vertically into the tuning pin hole is a good temporary fix for a loose pin. Experiment with different diameters of fishing line until the tightness feels correct. Very loose tuning pins may require more work and cost. Catch them early. If you remove a tuning pin and the lower part, the part normally buried in the pin block, is rusted, this is a bad sign. The rust will literally scour away the wood of the pin hole as you tune until the pin will no longer hold the string at the proper tension and tuning. If one tuning pin is rusted, it is very likely that they all are. If you wish for this dulcimer to last much longer, then all the tuning pins should be checked and replaced if rusted. When removing many or all of the tuning pins, it is normally faster and more convenient to replace the strings rather than reuse the old ones. String replacement is a time consuming and, therefore, expensive job. If your dulcimer is a good and valuable one, it is well worth replacing corroded tuning pins and strings. If the instrument is inexpensive or has other serious faults, it may be more practical to play it for as long as it works and replace it with a different dulcimer when tuning problems become insufferable.

A common situation is for it to become progressively more difficult to tune an accurate interval, usually a fifth interval, across the treble bridge. With time the instrument will get more and more out of tune across the bridge. This may be due to the treble bridge moving; over time tuning can, indeed, move the bridge. It is also common for the bridge to change shape slightly with time and use. Merely having the bridge reset to the intended interval (perfect fifth in many cases), is all that's needed. In some very old dulcimers, for instance 18th and early 19th century dulcimers, I've seen bridges so warped by years of string pressure that they must be replaced to restore the instrument to playing condition.

Corrosion of the strings and bridge caps will also make tuning difficult. Unless the strings are severely rusted, it may not be necessary to replace them. Clean a string by putting a drop of machine oil on a cloth, pinch the cloth around the string, and rub the vibrating length of the string. *Do not* get any oil on or even near the tuning pins or pin blocks! More stubborn rust can be removed with 0000 steel wool. Or jeweler's cloth will do for mild corrosion or just to clean strings. If any of the bridge caps are metal, make certain that they are cleaned of corrosion, also. Many of your dulcimers have bridge caps of Delrin, a hard plastic material in either black or white color. If the strings have cut into the Delrin, strings may be loosened so that the Delrin can be rotated so that the strings rest on a fresh, uncut area of the Delrin. This can work for metal bridge caps, too.

There is so much tension on a hammer dulcimer that it is common and understandable that they should warp a bit. This is acceptable within certain limits. We could, perhaps design dulcimers to be almost entirely warp free. But they might weigh an awful lot more than we'd want to carry, and they might not give a sound that we would accept. There are conditions when warping is unacceptable. First, if the instrument does not hold tune. Temperature changes will make the strings expand and contract, changing the string tension and, therefore, changing the string pitches (the tuning). If temperature is kept relatively constant, like indoors away from sunny windows and heat registers, a structurally sound dulcimer is likely to hold tuning moderately well for days or weeks at a time. If it doesn't, any warps, cracks, or loose joints that can be detected are taking your dulcimer farther from the performing stage and closer to dulcimer heaven (via the graveyard). Have it checked out.

Changes in the frame and soundboard will influence the height of the bridges and the height, therefore, of the strings. Strings that are too high or too low may rattle against the holes in the

*continued on next page*



bridges, provide insufficient down-bearing on bridges (especially the side bridges), or run so low that playing is difficult. For instance, if the bass strings are too low relative to the treble strings, it will be difficult to play the bass strings without accidentally hitting an adjacent (and, perhaps, musically inadvisable) treble string. The treble strings and bass strings must be well separated vertically near the playing bridges. Furthermore, the treble strings and bass strings should be the same height approximately midway between the two bridges. I call this the "crossover point," for obvious reasons. For ease of playing I find that the ideal crossover point is a bit closer to the bass bridge than exactly midway between the bridges. It is easier to play accurately near the bass bridge where only one side of the bridge is played. I like to have a little more playing room and leeway for error around the treble bridge and find I play with a more cheerful dynamic abandon on a dulcimer properly set up this way.

Warping of the soundboard, frame rails, and/or back of the dulcimer are most often the culprits in string height and crossover problems, assuming the dulcimer played well when new. If the instrument holds tune well, then the string heights and crossover can be controlled in a number of ways, including different size bridge caps, shimming the bridges, building replacement bridges, and altering the internal braces or soundposts. Sometimes a dulcimer just does not want to stay straight or in tune and rebuilding it or turning it into a heavier, less portable thing is just not an attractive option. Restringing with lighter gauges of strings may be all that's needed. An instrument with a slight tuning or warping problem might be restrung with wire one or two gauges lighter. If the problems are severe, more drastic lessening of string gauge and tension is in order. Generally this will also yield an instrument that is not as loud but prettier in tone.

One special caution for the hammer

dulcimer folks. Inspect your dulcimer stand even more critically than the dulcimer! I've seen expensive and even fatal damage to dulcimers from being tipped over or knocked off flimsy stands. Your stand should be strong, difficult to tip or knock over, and difficult to unbalance the dulcimer or knock it off the stand. Pay close attention to the security of any hinges or other structural hardware. An instrument is as strong as its weakest part, and this includes the stand. I see a lot of dulcimers that should have a fifty or one-hundred-year life being played on stands that probably have a two- to three-year life. This scares a dulcimer lover like me.

Well, I checked all of my dulcimers, how about you? One of my fretted dulcimers has a slight buzz on the bass string. I am going to fix it just as soon as I change the oil and clean the spark plugs on the airplane. I promise. 🐾

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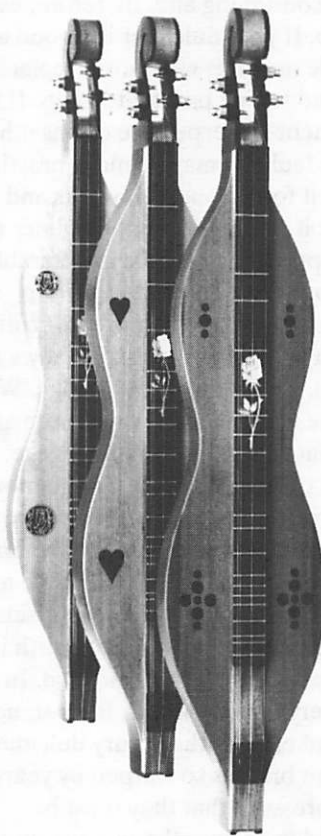
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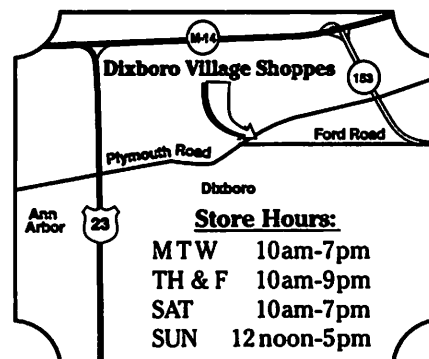
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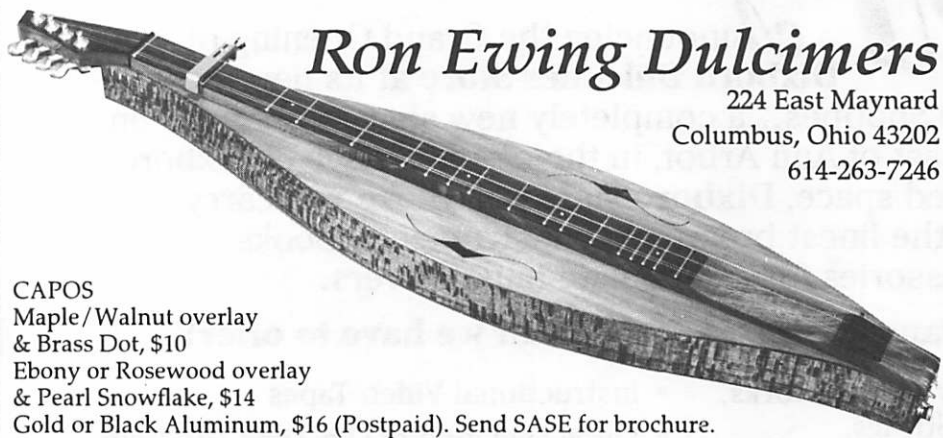
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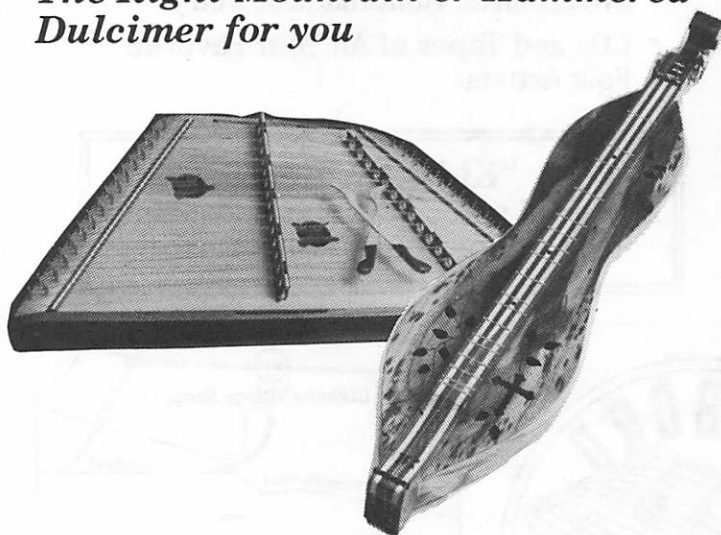
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## Dulcimers in Cyberspace

Summer 1996 ■ 15

by Tull Glazener

I need to begin this issue's column with an update to one of the resources mentioned in the last issue. Shortly after the last issue was sent to the printer, I learned of a change in address for **Cyberpluckers**, the mailing list devoted to autoharp players/builders. The new address is: [majordomo@autoharp.org](mailto:majordomo@autoharp.org). If you had problems getting signed up using the old address, try again with this one.

Several dulcimer clubs are now maintaining their own home pages on the web. One that is near and dear to my heart is the Central Indiana Folk Music and Mountain Dulcimer Society. Their web page includes the schedule for the monthly meetings and their "theme of the month," listings of upcoming festivals, and links to lots of other interesting web sites. One unique feature is the "Tune of the Month," which is a downloadable audio sample of a tune played by various members of the club. The site is maintained by David Silk ([dsilk@indyvax.iupui.edu](mailto:dsilk@indyvax.iupui.edu)), and can be accessed at <http://www.iupui.edu/~dsilk/dulsoc.html>.

It's often difficult to find copies of journals/magazines that deal with our favorite kinds of music at the corner newsstand. Never fear, the Internet is here! a number of these publications are now online with their own home pages on the World Wide Web. One of these journals is the *Old Time Herald*. Under the guidance of editor Alice Gerrard, this quarterly journal is dedicated to the support and promotion of old-time music. The on-line version includes some of the feature articles from the current issue, along with the complete reviews section of new recordings. You can also access back issues, send an on-line letter to the editor, or send in your subscription to receive the complete magazine. The web address is: <http://www.hidwater.com/OTH>.

Another journal of interest to those of us interested in folk/acoustic music is *Dirty Linen*, devoted to both acoustic and electric folk and "world" music, which is published six times a year. The on-line version includes the complete table of contents, selected feature articles from the current issue, and the complete reviews section, including recordings, books, videos, and concerts. You can also access several other features of the printed version on-line, including the famous "gig guide" listing of artists' itineraries and festival schedules. Lots of valuable information about record labels, new releases, and listing of musician-friendly venues and radio stations, are also available. Point your web browser at <http://www.dirtynelson.com/linen>

So you've found a description of what sounds like an interesting workshop festival, but you have no idea how to get there from where you are. You could go out and buy yourself an atlas, or sign up for AAA services...or access **Mapquest** via the 'net. This is a very slick interactive street guide that you can use to create and print out customized maps for anywhere in the continental United States. You can also have it

print out driving directions/distances to get from "point A" to "point B." You can find this resource at <http://www.mapquest.com>.

So now you've been to lots of workshops, have been practicing like crazy, and want to make a recording of your music and make it commercially available. One large and often time-consuming part of this process is securing the "mechanical license" required for recording copyrighted material. There are three major agencies out there to help you track down the authors, composers, and publishers of these works and secure the proper licenses, and all of them now have a presence on the Internet:

**Harry Fox Agency:** established in 1927 by the National Music Publishers Association to provide an information source, clearinghouse, and monitoring service for licensing musical copyrights. They can be found at <http://www.nmpa.org/hfa.html>.

**BMI—Broadcast Music, Inc.:** <http://rep.edge.net/>

**ASCAP—American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers:** <http://www.ascap.com>

We are in the middle of an explosive growth of resources available on the 'net. In order to help you find out what's out there, and do some of your own 'net surfing," there are several searching tools available. One of the best is called Altavista, created and maintained by the Digital Equipment Corporation. It is an indexed data-base of over thirty million web pages, spread out over 225,000 servers. It also indexes the complete articles from over 17,000 Usenet news groups. To do a search, point your browser at <http://www.altavista.digital.com>. Surf's up!

As you come across interesting web sites that you feel would be of interest to other DPN readers, be sure and share them by sending them, along with comments, suggestions, questions, or answers, to DPN ([hmdulc@visuallink.com](mailto:hmdulc@visuallink.com)), or to Tull Glazener ([tull@falcon.iupui.edu](mailto:tull@falcon.iupui.edu)). In the meantime, see you around the 'net!

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## Eurotunes

by David T. Moore

### The Wild Mountain Thyme

In this issue we return to Great Britain and begin a series of several columns on British music and musicians. I had the pleasure of spending part of April in England, visiting, doing a workshop, and performing. I renewed old friendships, started new ones, saw some wonderful sights, and heard some great new songs and tunes. It will be my pleasure to share them with you over then next several quarters (so stay tuned!).

It was at a folk club singer's night in Redditch, a town not far from Birmingham, during a series of "floor spots" performed by local club members. One singer commented that he'd prefer to do an old favorite and would anybody

mind. He sang "The Wild Mountain Thyme." Everybody joined in.

As I sang, I reminisced how I learned the song nearly 25 years earlier during my first trip to Britain. I spent a month working on the Brenig archaeological project in North Wales. Nearly a hundred of us lived in tents in one of the rainiest places I have ever visited.

In the evenings, we had to make our own entertainment, for we had no television and only one small battery-powered radio. On those rare occasions when the weather wasn't awful, and sometimes when it was, we'd stroll four miles across the moors to a local pub. Most of the time, however, we'd stay in our camp where the musicians would play and we'd listen and sing. With so many voices, we had wonderful harmonies. I learned "The Wild Mountain Thyme" during that month.

Over the years I forgot I knew this wonderful song. In April, once more in Britain, with a room full of singers, I remembered the song and sang it once

again. I knew then that I ought to share it with you too.

"The Wild Mountain Thyme" is a traditional Scottish song known across the British Isles. Harvest time in any land seems to be a time for romance. British moors covered with blooming heather are especially lovely and very conducive to falling in love.

To play this song as written you will need to tune your dulcimer to D-A-d. I fingerpick or flatpick the melody, adding hammer-ons and pull-offs as noted. I strum the chords.

As always, readers are welcome to contact me — by mail or e-mail. I may be reached at P.O. Box 358, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701-0358 or electronically at [dtmoore@clark.net](mailto:dtmoore@clark.net). I hope you enjoy this song. We'll meet again in the autumn. 🍂

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# The Wild Mountain Thyme

Traditional Scottish Song

Arrangement &amp; Tablature: David T. Moore, 1996

D-A-dd (1-5-8)

**D** **G** **D**

O the sum - mer-time is com - ing and the trees are sweet - ly bloom - ing And the  
I will build my love a bow - er by yon crys - tal flow - ing foun - tain; And  
If my true love will not go, I shall sure - ly find an - oth - er To pick

T 0 1 0 1 0 0 2 4 5 5 5 4 2 4 2 4  
A 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

h

**G** **F#m** **D** **A** **G** **D** **G**

wild moun - tain thyme\_ grows a - round the pur - ple heath - er.  
on it I will pile\_ all the flow - ers of the moun - tain. Will ye go, lass - ie  
wild moun - tain thyme\_ all a - round the bloom - ing heath - er.

T 3 2 0 1 0 3 0 3  
A 3 2 0 0 1 3 2 1  
B 5 4 2 1 0 1 2 3

p p

**D** **G** **D** **G** **F#m** **A**

go? And we'll all go to - geth - er: To pluck wild moun - tain thyme\_ all a -

T 2 3 3 4 3 2 1  
A 0 3 3 3 3 2 0  
B 0 2 4 5 5 4 2

h p

**G** **D** **G** **D**

round the pur - ple heath - er. Will ye go, las - sie go?

T 0 3 1 0 0 1 0 3 2  
A 3 2 1 0 0 0 0 1 0  
B 3 2 1 0 0 0 0 0 0

p

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# Mountain Dulcimer Tales & Traditions

by Ralph Lee Smith

## An Astonishing Discovery

Last October, Kay Zingsheim, a DPN reader in Overland, Kansas, sent me several pictures of an instrument in her possession that absolutely floored me. She subsequently sent me several more pictures. A selection of the pictures appears here. I think that they will probably astonish you too!

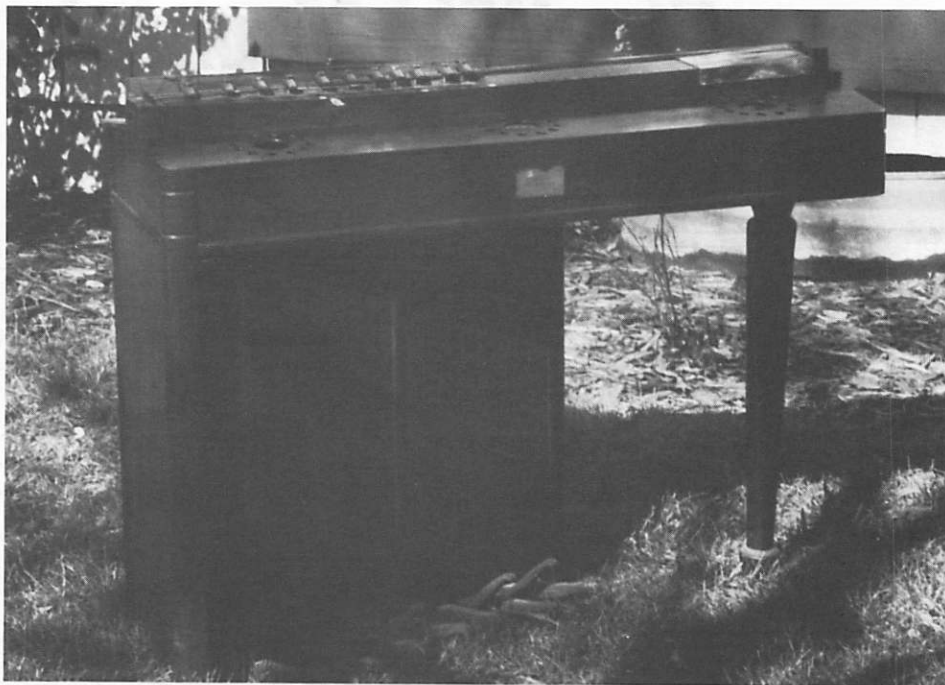
In her letter, Kay said in part:

I play hammered dulcimer and am in the Prairie Dulcimer Club. At our June 2nd Festival, a man from southern Missouri walked into the festival carrying this dulcimer on his shoulder, and informed everyone that he wanted to get 'rid of this thing, it's been taking up space in my storage shed for twenty-five years.' I looked it over with some of my fellow club members and paid the man what he was asking.

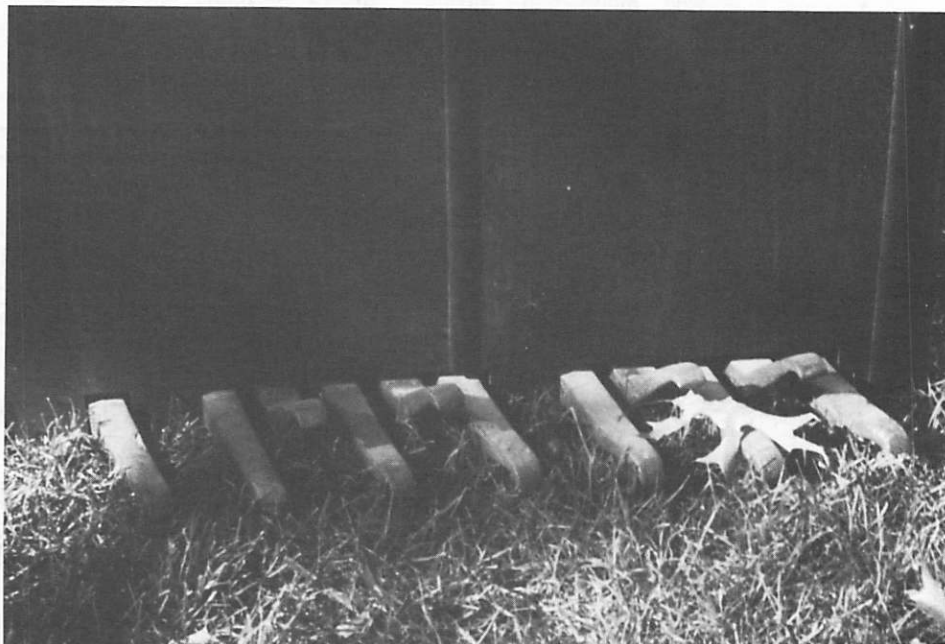
Kay states that the instrument is made of walnut, and is thirty-seven inches long, fifteen inches wide and twenty-seven inches high. The pedals, all in operating condition, control eleven stops that depress five strings running over a series of frets. A sixth string runs over a separate set of frets that duplicate the intervals of the frets under the five-string set for the first eleven frets, and continues beyond for a number of additional frets. A piece of tin is affixed to the bottom area of the fretboard, which Kay believes is probably a later addition.

The intervals of the fret sequences are irregular. Studying the pictures provided by Kay, I am not able to determine the rationale of the pattern.

The label on the front panel reads, "SIEGRIST Dulcimer PATENTED." Kay checked with Paul Gifford of Michigan, who has a patent list relating to dulcimers. Nothing that could relate to this instrument appears on his list. However, Kay did some additional research and made a fascinating discovery. In 1878, a person named Paul L. Siegrist who lived in New York State,



*The Siegrist Dulcimer*



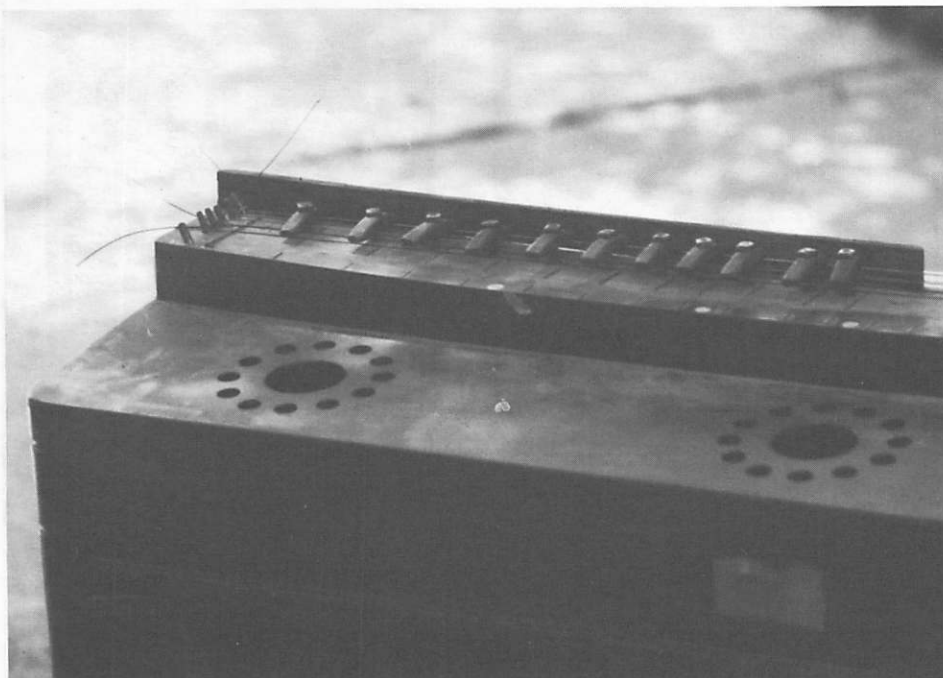
*The instrument's eleven pedals.*

received a patent for a loom that was operated by dampers!

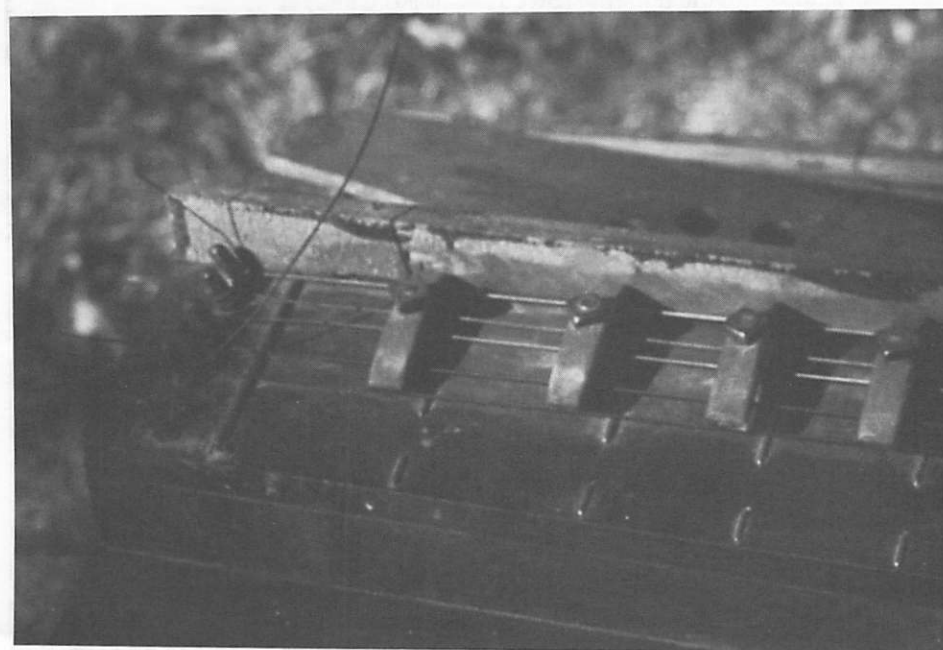
Among other things, this instrument is a fine piece of furniture. This fact, and the presence of a printed label, give every indication that a number of the instruments were produced in a shop that was capable of excellent cabinet-making. Its provenance suggests the Midwest, and perhaps Missouri.

The use of the word "Dulcimer" to

describe the instrument adds fuel to a little pile of unanswered questions that have been smoldering for a long time! How, when, and where did this word, used for centuries to describe a multi-string unfretted instrument of the psaltery family, pass across to become the descriptive term for a family of fretted folk zithers? It seems to have happened in America, but that's the extent of our current knowledge.



Detail photo, showing the eleven stops that pass over five frets.



Detail of the head, showing the six vertical tuning pins, the stops, and the two series of frets. The back panel, partially visible behind the fretboard, is broken.

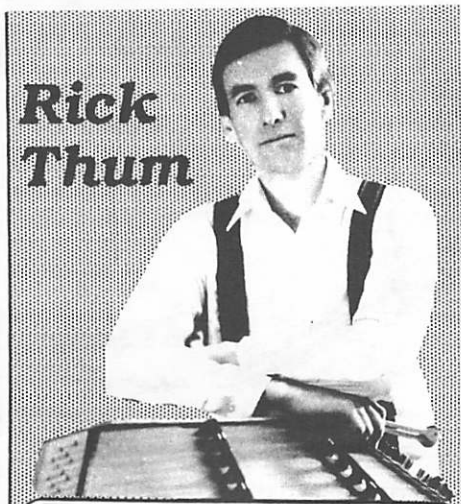
As far as I know, this instrument is the first of its type to be discovered. It ranks with dulcimers-in-boxes, a series of which have been described in this column as readers have been finding them, as an important addition to our knowledge of the history of fretted folk zithers in America. Now that you have seen these pictures, keep your eyes peeled in antique shops and flea mar-

kets, especially if you live in the Midwest! Please contact me if you find one.

Kay would like to have help in understanding the instrument and setting it up in playable fashion. Can you antique instrument buffs out there give her a hand? Her address is 7300 W. 102 St., Overland Park, Kansas 66112. Phone 913/648-5409. ☎



The label, which reads "SIEGRIST Dulcimer PATENTED."



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# SALLY HAWLEY

Born and raised in a small southern Indiana town, I grew up in a musical home. I can't remember a time when I wasn't doing something with music. My mother taught both school and music, and gave lessons on piano and violin. My father was a barber, and had his own bonafide barbershop quartet, holding forth in the shop after closing on Saturday nights. The group sang and played tunes from their childhoods, as well as tunes of the 1920s and 30s. Our family sang together often, and at the ages of four, six, and seven, my brother and sister and I sang three-part harmony as "The Hunter Trio." When I was nine years old, we first sang on radio. One of the local businessmen recorded the show, and invited us down to cut more recordings. I still have the 78 rpms. At that time I was also playing piano and violin. During the depression years, my mother taught an evening class in acoustic instruments which included guitar, banjo, violin, and mandolin, and I learned the basics of these from her. I have a photograph of her class taken in 1936. One of her cousins built violins, and it was one of the joys of my childhood to visit this cousin and play the violins. I grew up hearing, singing, and playing the old traditional tunes, while we were entertaining ourselves and others.

During high school I took up woodwinds, brass, and percussion instruments, so I could join the band and drum and bugle corps. I participated in anything musical in the area. . . school, church, civic groups, choirs, choruses. I organized a teen canteen band in the 1940s, and later a dance band. After WWII, I met and married George Hawley, a chemical engineer, in Central Indiana.

We transferred to West Virginia in 1959, and raised our family here, and I took up the autoharp. During the time I was working as a secretary and computer programmer, I met Edna and Ray Epler. Ray built and played lap dul-

cimer, and we discovered we had a lot in common. He taught me how to play the lap dulcimer, and we played as a duo until his death in 1989. Through him I learned many old-time tunes and met many of the traditional musicians in West Virginia. I was entranced with the hammered dulcimer and learned all I could from Russ Fluharty and Worley Gardner, and soon convinced Ray to also build hammered dulcimers. I added to my knowledge by attending various classes and workshops here and throughout the U.S.A.

During the last few years, I have enjoyed teaching, traveling and performing and giving workshops at festivals, churches, nursing homes, schools, and civic organizations. In addition to working solo, I also perform with three groups: The Different Drummer, The Presby Pickers, and Generic Tonic. In 1989 I organized the Almost Heaven Dulcimer Society, which meets monthly at the St. Albans, West Virginia, Public Library. This club takes part in local activities sponsored by the St. Albans Historical society and the Mary Ingles Trail Association. This group holds an annual encampment and reenactment of Mary Ingles' true story. She was kidnapped by Indians who took her to Shawnee country in Ohio; she escaped and returned to Virginia following the New, Kanawha, and Ohio rivers, as told in *Follow the River* by John Thom.

I have recorded four cassettes, *Something Old & Something New*, with Ray Epler, autoharp and lap dulcimers; *Heirlooms & Keepsakes* with Peter Kosky on guitar, featuring hammered dulcimer trios, a mixture of old-time and British Isles traditional music; *Timeless Treasures*, which includes bowed psaltery and pennywhistle, with David Gladkosky on mandolin and guitar and Jack Bowman on bass, featuring old-time American favorites. Also, I have compiled two books of traditional tunes, *From Humble Beginnings* and *From Humble Beginnings II*, plus sheet



music arrangements for solo, duet, and trios on hammered dulcimer. All of these include a few original tunes.

Now that I am getting older, I appreciate my musical heritage, and would like to pass it on to the next generation. I have been collecting traditional tunes for many years, and hope to perpetuate the art of playing traditional instruments and music. I particularly enjoy researching the historical backgrounds of the tunes as they relate to American and world history, the Renaissance, Reformation, Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and the personalities who collected these tunes. For me, it makes history come alive.

It has been the joy of my life to play for older people who pause and remember the old tunes, and the younger folks who will listen about the "old days." I believe that our history and values are expressed through the music that has survived through the years of good and difficult times. We can still communicate with the past through this music: the love, the pain, the struggles, the successes, the hope, the joy, the sense of humor; and we can find strength for our own lives, knowing that others who enjoyed this music survived and passed this way. 🎵

Sally Hawley  
425 9th Ave.  
Saint Albans, West Virginia 25177  
304/727-9833

*music follows on next page*

# PUNCHEON

Arr. by S. J. Hawley

## PART I

## PART II

# FLOOR

*Traditional*

## PART III

Part III consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time, key of D major. The first staff contains a single melodic line. The second staff features a first ending bracket labeled 'fine' with two endings. The third staff continues the melodic line. The fourth staff features a second ending bracket labeled 'D.S. al fine' with two endings.

## PART IV

Part IV consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time, key of D major. The first staff contains a single melodic line. The second staff features a first ending bracket labeled 'fine' with two endings. The third staff continues the melodic line. The fourth staff features a second ending bracket labeled 'D.S. al fine' with two endings.





# MAGICAL STRINGS

## An interview with Pam and Philip Boulding

by William Bole  
Lowell, Massachusetts

There is a magical, mystical air that surrounds the music of Philip and Pam Boulding, and the romantic tale of how they found each other at the end of Pam's long and tantalizing search for a hammered dulcimer.

Seemingly fated encounters, the wedding of harp and dulcimer, the place where Celtic meets classical, where strings touch the soul—these are notes of a distinctive arrangement that is the sound and story of the Bouldings.

Their group is called Magical Strings, with Pam on hammered dulcimer and Philip on Celtic harp, hammered dulcimer, and pennywhistles. Their sound is their own, a product in part of composition—Pam and Philip write and arrange many of the tunes—and construction: Philip designs the harps and dulcimers. Their traditional renderings are commonly Celtic and occasionally Caribbean or Norwegian.

Depending on the venue, Magical Strings may also feature Geoffrey, Brenin, Morgan, Marshall, or Brittany, the children who round out the family

ensemble. Last summer, it was 13-year-old Brittany who fiddled with Philip and Pam at the Downeast Dulcimer and Folk Harp Festival in Bar Harbor, Maine, across the continent from their home and farm on Puget Sound in Washington state.

During the annual festival, presented in July by the Song of the Sea music store in Bar Harbor, the couple paused to talk about their life and music.

Pam, who played piano while growing up, told of her first encounter with the hammered dulcimer, in the late 1970s.

"I was at a party, and there was someone playing this incredible instrument. I was drawn over to it, and I

*Above: Philip and Pam Boulding (seated) with their musical family. Standing (l. to r.): Brittany, Marshall, Geoffrey, Erin, Morgan, and Brenin.*

stood there, listening. It was actually an instrument that Philip had built for someone, but I didn't know this; I didn't know Philip at the time. But I knew instantly that I had to play this instrument," she recalled.

"So I went searching. I looked throughout Seattle in every music store. And finally, after a couple of months, I walked into this tiny store in the Pike Place Market, and there was a hammered dulcimer on consignment. But it cost \$125. So I thought I should go home and think about it.

"When I got home I realized this was one of the most ridiculous things I had ever done. I had spent two months looking for a dulcimer. What if someone came in after me and walked off with it and I'd have to begin my search all over again? So I went back the next morning, at 9:00, and they weren't open. I came back an hour later, and they still weren't open. I came back at 11:00, 12:00, I kept coming back, and no one was there all day long. This was in the middle of the week, and there was the dulcimer, sitting in the window.

"I came back the next day—and this was quite a task, because I live over an hour away by ferry—and there was a sign on the window saying they had closed: gone out of business. When I finally reached the owner by phone, he said the dulcimer had just been picked up (by the person who had put it on consignment) and was off to Oregon, and he had no contact number. And so my search for a hammered dulcimer ended, for the time being.

"Later on, I was reading the paper and noticed there was a hammered dulcimer class offered, and along with the class came an instrument. Well the last thing I wanted was a teacher." (Pam had rebelled as a child against the rigidities of classical training.)

"I only wanted an instrument. So I

called up to find out if there was any way to just get a dulcimer. The answer was no. There were just enough instruments built for the students. This was in the spring, and I was teaching a music class for teachers of young children the only night dulcimer lessons were offered. It wasn't until the following fall that I was able to sign up for the class, almost a year after I had first seen a hammered dulcimer. I arrived for the class, and there was Philip, the teacher, and the instrument.

*"If I could take the essence of what I love about classical music and folk music, what I love about symphony orchestras and small ensembles, and translate that into what two people could do on two instrument...that's the sound of Magical Strings."*

"When we met, it was like we had known each other all of our lives and had been looking for each other. He actually had felt that he was about to meet someone who would have a significant role in his life. He also had this image of magical strings—of a harp and a dulcimer together."

At the time, Philip was playing and making Celtic harps as well as hammered dulcimers. "The dulcimer was the one I always felt was more the extrovert, more dance-like, and the harp the inward-looking one, the introvert that reaches deeply into the soul.

"Gradually it came to me that these two instruments would blend in a magnificent way because of both their opposite qualities and their similar qualities. They both had lots of strings that were capable of producing marvelous resonances and harmonies. For me, the dulcimer was more of a melody instrument, the harp more of a harmonic or chordal kind of instrument. The dulcimer had the steel strings with the piercing, dance-like quality of sound, the harp had the mellower, fuller sound. I just knew that in putting the two instru-

ments together, it was like taking two halves of a whole and creating a full orchestra-like sound that would be unique and complete in its musical expression.

"When I met Pam that vision became a reality. She had a similar musical spirit to mine, and she took to the dulcimer very quickly. Within a few months, we were composing music together. She was also the impetus for my own composing work on the harp. She was the catalyst for freeing my creative musical spirit."

What is the sound that flows from this musical and marital union?

"If I could take the essence of what I love about classical music and folk music, what I love about symphony orchestras and small ensembles, and translate that into

what two people could do on two instruments—incorporating elements of a lyrical melody, a strong rhythm, and lush harmonic overtones—that's the sound of Magical Strings," Philip said, chuckling at his long-winded response.

"Although I do feel that our sound is unique, and drawn from several

*continued on the next page*

## DISCOGRAPHY

Recordings on Flying Fish Records

Bell off the Ledge, 1993

Good People All—A Celtic Yuletide Tradition 1991, 1992

Crossing to Skellig 1990

Philip Boulding—Harp 1988

On the Burren 1987

Above the Tower 1985

Spring Tide 1982

On their own label

Glass Horse 1980

sources, the roots of our inspiration come inherently from the Celtic tradition, predominantly Irish. All of our music is imbued with this Celtic spirit. Pam and I have travelled to Ireland several times, and each journey brings fresh inspiration from this ancient, yet timeless heritage. We synthesize our more formal, classical music backgrounds with the less formal, heart-felt element of folk and traditional music that we also grew up with."

While the sound pretty much came forth as Philip had envisioned, it didn't quite become Magical Strings until he designed and refined the instruments to achieve the blend of tones they were striving for.

"The instruments we are currently playing are the ones we've been playing for about fifteen years now. My floor-standing, Celtic harp was the culmination of years of work. It has a very full and open bass sound, a bright treble, but not too bright, and a fairly even tone all the way up the range of five

octaves. The warmth of the nylon-string harp, and its fullness of mid-to-bass range, provides the low-end background for the dulcimer, which is bright and trebly," Philip said.

"The dulcimer is the tricky one. It's such a high-end instrument, inherently, that to strive for the balance of a full-bodied sound, along with that bright, high-end sound, is difficult to do. An instrument like the dulcimer is under so much tension already that there's a temptation to build too heavily for it to really resonate properly. So the balancing point is building it lightly enough to resonate the way I want it to, and yet to make it strong enough so that it can withstand the tension of the strings."

Pam feels her own playing, and composing, is inseparable from Philip's building.

"My dulcimer has such a dynamic range. I can really pull out of the instrument the full dynamics that I'm feeling—the music that expresses the energy of my inner-most spirit. My

instrument has a particularly clear ringing sound to it. For me it's very alive and responsive.

"I know there has been a trend in dulcimer building to do it in such a way that the sustain somehow disappears or is reduced, so you can play with a lot of other instruments. But my desire in playing the dulcimer is to utilize the expressions of each note, so I can put everything into the dynamics of how every note is played and ornamented rather than how many notes are incorporated into my arrangements. It's how each note is played; it's the space between each note. It's the intensity with which I can express my creative force.

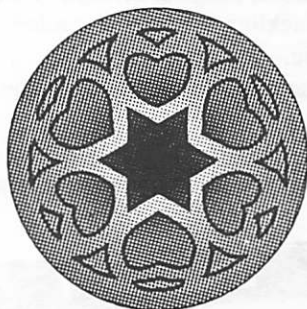
"The dulcimer itself just draws from you certain movements, certain rhythms, certain patterns and sounds. It's all sort of hidden in the dulcimer. You just have to release it. It's in the motion, in the physically repeated motion of the hammers, like the rhythms of the heart. You really become physically at one with this expression. There's so much freedom in expressing all of my thoughts and feelings. It's a tremendous opportunity to share." 🎵

In July 1996, EarthBeat Records releases Magical Strings' ninth recording, *Islands Calling*. Phil Boulding describes it as New World Celtic Acoustic. On December 19th and 20th, Pam and Phil will present their 18th Annual Celtic Yuletide concert in Seattle.

*Magical Strings*  
P.O. Box 4086  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 857-3716

William Bole is a freelance journalist in Lowell, Massachusetts. His articles have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *New York Times*, among other publications. He plays lap dulcimer, guitar, and mandolin at sessions and contra dances in the Boston area.

## ~ CLOUD NINE ~



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| 603 | Hond. Mahogany..... | 3.80 | 3.65 | 3.25 |
| 605 | Curly Maple.....    | 6.25 | 5.95 | 5.35 |
| 607 | Padauk.....         | 4.85 | 4.60 | 4.15 |

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|     |                         |       |       |       |
|-----|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
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| 852 | Hond. Mahogany..... | 2.30 | 2.15 | 1.95 |
| 853 | Clear Maple.....    | 2.05 | 1.95 | 1.75 |
| 855 | Curly Maple.....    | 2.75 | 2.60 | 2.35 |
| 857 | Padauk.....         | 2.65 | 2.55 | 2.30 |

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|      |               |           |      |               |            |
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| 3025 | 5-48.....     | \$1.65 ea | 3027 | 145 & up..... | \$1.30 ea. |

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|      |                                                |
|------|------------------------------------------------|
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|      |            |           |      |               |            |
|------|------------|-----------|------|---------------|------------|
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| 5075 | Pkg. of 72 .....                                            | 11.60 |      |                   |       |
| 5071 | Herdin® "3 in 1" picks (3 gauges in 1 pick)                 |       |      |                   |       |
|      | (1-2) .75 ea (3-5) .60 ea. (6-11) .53 ea. (12 & up) .45 ea. |       |      |                   |       |

## ZITHER TUNING PEGS Nickel plated

|       |                  |       |       |                   |        |
|-------|------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|--------|
| 11002 | each.....        | .30   | 11020 | Pkg. of 500.....  | 80.00  |
| 11000 | Pkg. of 50.....  | 11.50 | 11030 | Pkg. of 1000..... | 135.00 |
| 11010 | Pkg. of 250..... | 47.50 |       |                   |        |

## HITCH PINS Nickel plated .135 X 1 1/4" long

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|-------|------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|
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# George Haggerty



by Roxenne Smith  
Ozona, Florida

From the time that George Haggerty first saw the mountain dulcimer pictured in a Foxfire book, he felt a strong connection with the instrument. A photograph was not much to go on, but in studying the simple lines of the dulcimer, he was convinced that it could but only play the music he loved.

For years, George had listened to radio station WW Wheeling, West Virginia and had heard recordings of dulcimer music, but did not hear it played live until he built one from a kit in 1979. He had fashioned a beautiful Foxfire likeness, but had no idea how to even tune the dulcimer. With his newly-tooled instrument packed safely in a hand-hewn box, he strapped it to the back of his motorcycle and headed for the Autumn Hills Dulcimer Festival. It was there, under the guidance of Dallas Cline, that George learned dulcimer basics.

Within a year George had progressed from a state of severe tuning anxiety to composing his own pieces. His natural rapport with the instrument led to professional opportunities, and in 1989 he gave up his high school teaching position to pursue a full-time career in what he loved best. With the help of his wife Mary, he now owns and operates Folk Craft Music in Wilmington, Vermont. He also teaches, performs, and builds mountain dulcimers.

George is a dulcimer teacher, working with students of all ages. For some

of his older students who are "transportation disadvantaged," he has reinstituted the time-honored tradition of making house calls. It's entirely therapeutic, he claims, but is not covered by Medicare.

One of his calls took him to the home of an older woman who had seen George featured in a local column about performing artists. She told him that she was so delighted by the articles, she had clipped the column, picture and all, and attached it to her refrigerator door. "When she asked if I could do some work for her I thought she wanted to hire me for a gig," he said. "But she was looking for someone to repair her screen door. She figured that if I could build a musical instrument, fixing a door should be no problem. She paid me five dollars and offered me a cup of coffee."

When asked about his finest dulcimer moment, George gave a low whistle. "There are so many," he said. "Every time I pick up this instrument something grand happens, but I guess my grandest moments have been with the children." George's newest proteges are school children from the local districts who have clearly claimed his heart, and vice versa. He told of the class who fashioned musical notes out of bakers' clay to hang on his Christmas tree, and the many children who have sent him handmade cards expressing their feelings for him. "I am thrilled to death with these kids," he said. "I love to watch them learn to play this instrument and get better and better at it. It makes me feel good to know that I am

helping to expand their horizons beyond the world of Nintendo."

In George's world, there is little room for Nintendo. Influenced deeply by the writings of Thoreau, his philosophy derives from the tenet that there is a natural and unfettered beauty in simplicity. George's craftsmanship, his playing style, and his compositions all reflect this deeply held value. "There is a greatness in simplicity," said George, referring to traditional music, "and that is the sound I strive for when composing."

"White Creek Pass," an original tune with a traditional Appalachian flavor, exemplifies George's affinity for the uncomplicated chord structures of early mountain music. A lively, foot-tapping tune, it is easy to play and lends itself well to a blending of instruments as recorded on his second album, *Just Friends Again*.

What prompts George's compositions? "I have an insatiable need to express myself in this way," he says. "Sometimes I will wake up suddenly in the middle of the night with an original tune in my head. I will get up and go to work on it." At other times, he said, his tunes emerge as unsolicited gifts. "I was repairing a dulcimer which belonged to a student and I started running the scale to see if the frets were true. 'White Creek Pass' came out of it. My feet just started dancing."

Beyond composing, crafting, and teaching, George's contributions to the dulcimer world are considerable. He has recorded two albums (*Just Friends* and *Just Friends Again*), designed and

# White Pass Creek

May be heard on the cassette,  
"Just Friends Again"

© 1991 George Haggerty

1  
D  
A  
D  
4-7-7-7-7-4 5-6-5-4 4-7-7-7-7-4

4  
5-6-5-4 4-7-7-7-7-4 5-6-5-4

7  
0-0-1-2-0 2-2 1-1-1 0-0-0 0-1-2-1 0

11  
0-0-1-2-0 0-0-0 1-1-1 0-0-0 0-0-1-2-1-0 1

15  
0-0-1-2-0 0-0-0 1-1-1 1-0 0-0 0-1-0

manufactures the Sweet-water dulcimer capo, and is creator and coordinator of the annual dulcimer event, August Dulcimer Daze, in West Dover, Vermont. More importantly, he has instilled in many aspiring players a deep-down love

for the instrument and the musical traditions from which it derives. 🎵

*George Haggerty*  
PO Box 1572, Wilmington, VT 05363  
802/464-7450

Roxie Smith of Ozona, Florida is a professional writer and gerontologist. She has used the dulcimer as a therapeutic instrument in her work with Hospice patients, and now works for Hospice as a grant writer.



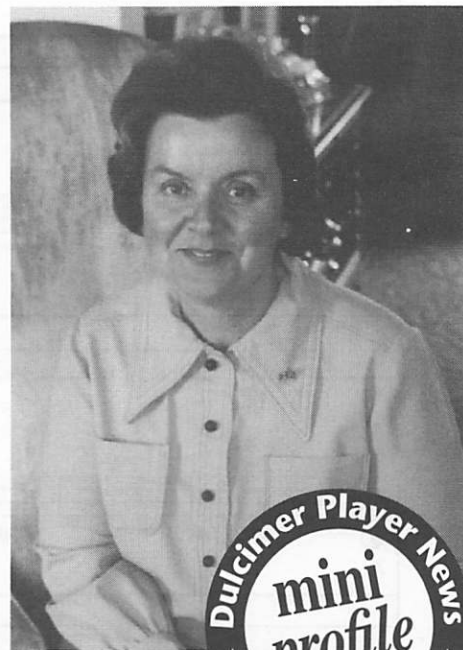
# Judy Ireton

The summer of 1981 found me heading off to camp to be a counselor. While raising five children I had never left my family on their own before. The dutiful wife and mother had to prepare plenty of food ahead of time and find activities to keep one husband and two remaining children happy. As I look back on this lunacy I laugh. At the time, it was important. A nearby city holds four weeks of entertainment every summer—drama, art, and music. Everything from rock to light opera is performed. That particular summer a young man by the name of Malcolm Dalglish was on the program. I knew nothing about hammered dulcimers or any other kind of dulcimers, but my husband often mentioned a customer who built dulcimers, and this man played a dulcimer, so I marked the information on the calendar for them to be sure and see.

This act changed my life. My thirteen-year-old son made me a dulcimer for Christmas, I gave my husband a dulcimer kit for Christmas, and things began to happen fast. We joined a dulcimer club. Ed built a hammered dulcimer, I built a mountain dulcimer. Soon Ed was building instruments for others and every minute he was not working, he was building or we were off playing somewhere. At least twice a week we were playing at a nursing home or at one of the local parks or festivals. Two Saturdays of the month were for dulcimer club meetings and that made for some interesting juggling with two teenagers. Cleaning house became an occasional event and playing became an obsession. We began attending festivals the next summer. I guess we have attended more than one hundred and twenty-five since then. The first festival I attended, I went to a mountain dulcimer workshop the first morning. Ed

tuned my instrument for me and so, with great anticipation, off I went. The teacher was teaching in another tuning and I had no idea how to reach this tuning. By the end of the hour I had gotten somewhat close but alas, it was all over by then. Figuring that everyone would be using this different tuning I went back to my campsite and had Ed do a good job of getting the instrument in this new tuning. Off I went to the next workshop. Need I tell you this workshop leader was not using the tuning my dulcimer was now so well tuned in? It was time for me to learn to tune my own instrument.

I had played the piano as a child but like most had never learned music theory. I just played what was in front of me the way the teacher said and that was it. The mountain dulcimer did not restrict me this way. I was free to find tunes that were in my head and free to find chords that just sounded good. I had no idea what they were—they just had the notes I liked to hear! No one told me I couldn't do something I wanted to try. Other than being in tune and observing some semblance of timing, I was free to make the instrument speak in whatever language my mood dictated. I could beat on the poor thing, playing a fast-paced fiddle tune or enjoy the melancholy of a delicate, minor, finger-picked ballad. Soon, I had to try the hammered dulcimer and then the harp. After this I became an expert at trying something new. I never did master any of the other instruments but I sure am having fun! My cat will not tolerate me playing the penny whistle so that is the one instrument I seldom play. The mountain dulcimer has remained the instrument I play the most. I doubt that I will ever find all the notes on it. I doubt that I will ever tire of the sound. It helps



express my joy and, as the song says, washes away my troubles. It is a friend.

I have been teaching for the last ten or eleven years and I can honestly say that I have learned more since I began teaching than I knew before. I had always trusted using what my ear said was a pleasing sound or chord, but eventually I became frustrated not knowing what the chords were or why I liked certain sounds. Off I went to the local college and after a quarter of music theory I knew why what I was doing was all right. More important, I learned how to identify what I was doing and how to write it down for others to play. I have tabbed several hundred songs since then. I really recommend that anyone who can, take music theory. Don't get too carried away with your knowledge, though. Remember, this is a simple instrument

# Dumbarton's Drums

Tune DAD (1-5-8)  
Key of D Mixolydian

Traditional Scottish  
© 1993 Dulcimer Arrangement, Judy Ireton

1

D Aug.7 G Bm G D

6

A D G

12

D A D

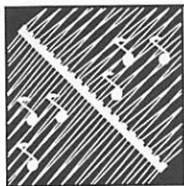
and does not demand theory to make it sound good. I tell all of my students: trust your ear. This is difficult for so many! If you like the sound, fine. Explore, expand, experiment, and enjoy your playing. Try new and different styles and tunes. I have given many workshops at festivals and I try hard to use different tunings, unusual chords, different tunes. It is my hope to stretch the talents of everyone I teach.

Is there another side of me other than music? Owning a catalog music sales business precludes many outside activities. I enjoy gardening, painting, sewing, or any type of hand work. Stained glass is stacked in the basement awaiting my attention. I have spent years doing genealogy. I love to embroider and do counted cross stitch. I have

raised about every critter imaginable and still cry when anyone of them dies. No hobby will ever hold a greater love for me than the out-of-doors. My husband and I spend every chance we get walking, looking, and listening. Reading would have to come close to my love of the out-of-doors. Books fill every end table and shelf. I love to cook, hate to clean. I spend hours at the computer and can hold my own with almost anyone doing desktop publishing. I love to learn and enjoy teaching. I am involved with Touch For Health, an alternative health discipline, and give more than a dozen classes each year. All of these events allow me to recharge my energy and my happiness. They help me to continue to grow. I have raised five children and now have eight grandchildren.

Most important in my life has been my husband, Ed. With both of us playing, I have had more freedom to attend so many more events. We have had the pleasure of meeting thousands of dulcimer players. We have had the fun of learning tunes from all over the country, playing with some of the best players in the country as well as with the most excited beginners. I think the dulcimer community is the warmest group of people I have ever worked with. I feel welcome and wanted, it is a sharing and caring group of people. I consider myself fortunate to have happened upon the world of dulcimers! 🎵

Judy Ireton  
6865 Scarff Rd.  
New Carlisle, Ohio 45344



# Hammered Dulcimer

by Linda Lowe Thompson

## Starting With The Chords

**I**t seems to me there's only three ways to play dulcimer: tune without embellishments, tune with embellishments, and embellishments without tune (back-up).

As I've told you, I'm doing more and more multi-level workshops. Of course, on *some* level, all sessions with more than one student at a time are *bound* to be, more or less, multi-level. Some of the most satisfying both to me and my students have been the ones in which we start with the chords. I show them which chords will be used, then call out the chord numbers (Roman numerals) while I play the tune over and over. When they start playing the tune, it comes quite easily for most of them and harmonies are easy to hear because

they've learned the tune while listening to the chords.

In this tune, I used only three chords. It's in the key of D. The D scale is D, E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D. The chords used are D (D, F#, A), A (A, C#, E), and G (G, B, D). For these lessons, I call them by their Roman numeral names: D is I (it's based on the first tone of the scale). G is IV (based on the fourth tone). And, you guessed it — A is V. The D chord is made up of any and all of the D's, F#'s, and A's on your instrument. If you're taking a picture of a family, it's the same family if they all change positions for the next shot. And, in fact, the family's still represented if some of them leave. So it is with these chords. The notes don't have to be in any particular order and, in fact, they don't even all have to be present at the same time to represent their chord.

Start by playing the chords as I've written them out. Notice that each of the three lines of chords has two sets of the chord progression I, IV, V. The ideal thing would be to have someone play the unembellished tune for you while you play the chords. We'll start with chords in the middle section of D. To begin, learn only the first three measures of the first line of the D Chords chart. Then, when there's a D over the portion of the melody being played, you play the I chord. When there's a G, you play the IV chord. When there's an A, you play the V chord. When you learned the chords from this chart, you learned 4 beats of each chord. When you're actually playing with the tune, you'll have to adjust the number of beats per chord to fit what the tune calls for. After you've played chords with melody a couple of times, learn the second three measures in the first line. Now, have the melody played again for you while you play the same chords the way they appear in those second three measures. After you've gotten the first line of chords under your belt, you may want to try line 2, which moves into the higher section of D. The third line plays those same chords in the lower section of D.

When I'm practicing, I don't usually have someone standing around who can

play melodies for me. If I don't know the melody very well, I tape myself playing or singing it and, then, play the recording while I'm practicing my chords. If you have a way to tape it using an instrument other than dulcimer, I've found that's even better for practicing chords than playing dulcimer chords while hearing dulcimer melody. If I know the tune really well before I start, I just hum the melody while learning the chords. If you sing as badly as I, you might want to let the dog out before you start this.

After the melody and chords have been played together over and over, we're ready to proceed. This is where it gets more multi-level. Do whatever you want. If you wish to play just the tune, do so. It's the top set of notes in the arrangement given here. If you wish to continue just playing the chords in the way I've shown, that's fine. If you'd like to learn a solo arrangement, here's one for you to try. See how the embellishments are all based on the chords?

I play this tune quite slowly, so this arrangement isn't quite so difficult as it may look to you at first glance. But, I urge you to alter the embellishments to fit your skill level/taste. One of my advanced beginning/beginning intermediate students regularly takes the first embellishment in each measure and plays unadorned melody for the rest of each measure. She contends that the dulcimer rings that long from the first embellishment, anyway.

The next issue of DPN will continue this session by giving you another tune/arrangement with these same chords and exploring some back-up ideas for *Farewell to Tarwathie*.

Stravinsky said "Harpists spend ninety percent of their lives tuning their harps and ten percent playing out of tune." I'll leave you with my latest favorite quote — from that well-known philosopher Nike: "The only one who can tell you you can't is you. And you don't have to listen." Send all questions, requests, suggestions, and running-shoe print ad quotes to me at 1114 Vine Street Denton TX 76201. Phone 817-387-4001. Fax 817-565-1862. ☎



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# D Chords

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**System 1:**

- Measure 1: I (D F# A D), 1' 3' 5' 1"
- Measure 2: IV (D G B D), 1' 4' 6' 1"
- Measure 3: V (C# E A C#), 7 2' 5' 7'

**System 2:**

- Measure 1: I (F#), 3' 1" 5'
- Measure 2: IV (G), 4" 1" 6'
- Measure 3: V (E), 2" 7' 5'

**System 3:**

- Measure 1: I (D), 1' 5' 3' 5
- Measure 2: IV (D), 1' 6' 4' 5
- Measure 3: V (C#), 7 5' 2' 5

## Farewell to Tarwathie

George Scroggie, who had been a miller at Federate in the parish of New Deer, Aberdeenshire, wrote this song c. 1853.

Arrangement © 1996  
Linda Lowe Thompson

Three systems of musical notation for the song "Farewell to Tarwathie". Each system shows three measures with different voicings and fingerings.

**System 1:**

- Measure 1: D, 1' 2'
- Measure 2: G, 5, 1', 3' 1' 1' 6 5 5
- Measure 3: D, 6 1' 2' 1' 3' 1' 2'

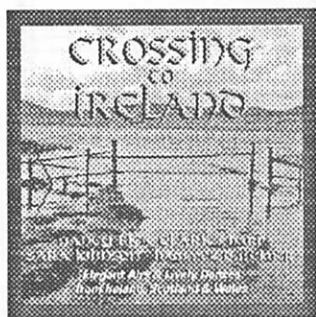
**System 2:**

- Measure 1: G, 5, 1', 3' 1' 1' 6 5 5
- Measure 2: D, 6 1' 2' 1' 3' 2' 1' 3' 5' 6' 5' 3'
- Measure 3: G, 5 1' 3' 4' 3'

**System 3:**

- Measure 1: A, 2' 1' 2' 3' 7 1' 5
- Measure 2: D, 5, 1', 3' 1' 1' 6 5 5
- Measure 3: G, 6 1' 2' 1' 3' 5 1

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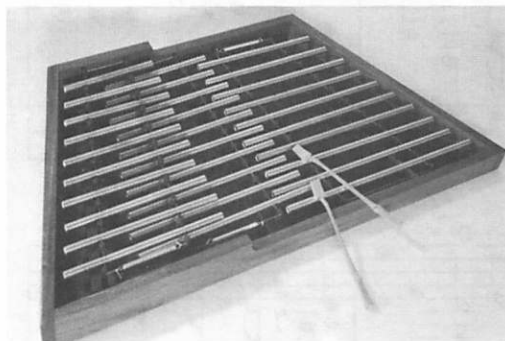
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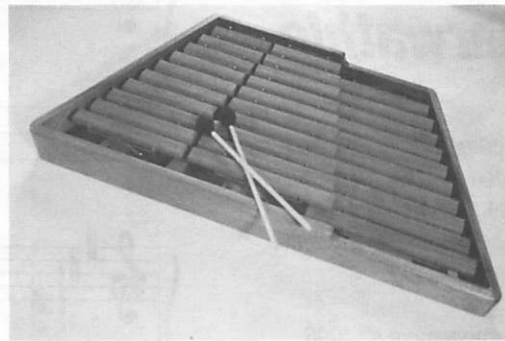
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# The Art of Performing

Summer 1996 ■ 35

by Steve Schneider

## Beginners

**A**re you a beginning performer, an individual who hasn't performed much? Are you driven to play in public but haven't yet taken the steps to make it happen? Do you perform regularly and wish you did it better? Do you imagine yourself onstage with your dulcimer as you sit in the audience listening to others play? Read on!

There are many issues to consider when it comes to playing music publicly. The greater our awareness of them, how they affect us and how we can best deal with them, the more flexible and effective we'll be as performers. Presented here are some questions to answer that might make your job as a new performer a bit easier, and possibly

more successful and satisfying: why, what, who, when, where, for whom, and how. What follows is hardly exhaustive, but it represents a basic outline of issues to consider and to be aware of with regard to performing.

**Why:** It's important to ask (and answer) the question: "Why am I doing this?" During times of doubt, anxiety, and worry, answering this question can help relax us, to get us back on track. We often forget why we're putting ourselves through the anxious anticipation that often precedes a performance. When you're feeling queasy and the butterflies in your stomach are swarming, you will relax a bit if you can simply remember the question, and then answer it. For example, Q: "Why do I put myself through this?" A: "I'm doing this because I love to play music." Aaaaah, now you remember, and you're on track once again.

**What:** What will you perform? When it's your choice, perform the music you love. Your feelings about and relationship with the music you play is evident to the audience. We can tell when a performer isn't excited about the music s/he is playing, and you certainly can tell when a performer is—they and the music are alive, dancing and singing together, and the audience responds by becoming alive, too.

**Who:** Do you play solo? With others? Who are the others? Especially when just starting out, it's important to find music partners who will be supportive, encouraging, enthusiastic—people with whom you have a good rapport. If you're not comfortable playing alone, there's nothing wrong with getting the support of another individual, another instrument. I prefer playing with others, and as a duo, my first choice would be a guitarist. A good guitarist will give you

*continued on next page*

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rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment, and can also provide melody and harmony when needed. It frees up the dulcimer player (both species) to play simpler, to improvise, and to have a partner with whom you can share your excitement and love of music on and off stage.

Since it's bound to happen sometime, be prepared to play solo. Anything can (and will) happen: your partner can't make it; you don't have a partner; your partner's finger is stuck in a soda can (this actually happened to me once). Practice performing alone in the anticipation of that possibility, and then when you have to, it won't be so surprising.

**When:** When are you ready? If you're not sure, you can find out from friends, relatives, anyone you can drag into your house to hear you play. Seek constructive feedback and use it. You do not have to be perfect to perform. This is a ridiculous myth that keeps a lot of won-

derful players from playing for others. Practice does not make perfect: it can make us more comfortable and better musicians. When I attend a performance, my goal is to experience the performer *in the process* of presenting his or her art, and I'm there to respond to the art through the artist. One of my "rules to live by" is that there are no *wrong* notes — only *alternative* ones. Sometimes these alternative notes are actually better than the intended ones, and we have to learn to expect and incorporate them into our performances if we want to play fluently. This is an art that requires practice.

And don't wait until you feel "comfortable." You may never feel comfortable, so get used to it, get the support you need, and get out there and play if you really want to.

**Where/For Whom:** Consider the audience with whom you would be most likely to be comfortable, and for whom your music is appropriate. If you can,

start with them and work your way to the more difficult audiences. Everyone is different: some prefer to play for people they already know. These people can begin by playing at informal gatherings for friends and family. Others report that these are the last people for whom they would consider playing, and would prefer to play for complete strangers.

If you're in the "more comfortable with strangers" camp, then nursing homes, hospitals, hospices, churches, libraries, and prisons are ready-made venues for you to play. These are "captive audiences" who are often in need of live stimulation, and chances are they'll appreciate your taking the time to give them something so precious as music.

Another option is the "open mike." This gives new performers an opportunity to play a piece or two onstage, usually at a coffeehouse or some sort of venue where live, acoustic music is featured. Open mikes are usually held

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weekly or monthly, and you can find out about them by checking local listings of musical events or by calling your local coffeehouse. If you haven't experienced an open mike before, you might want to attend one as a spectator before planning to play. This prepares you a bit more for what to expect when you go there to perform.

**How:** How do you start? You already have. You play an instrument, you have a growing repertoire, and you're reading this article. You just need two more things: a set list, and a deadline.

A set list (a list of the pieces you plan on performing) can help you to prepare a balanced performance. For example, choose a mixture of pieces with a variety of meters (4/4, 3/4, 6/8, for example), tempi (faster, slower, moderate speeds), and feelings. Stay aware that your music will be affecting the audience on many levels. You also need to think of your own comfort level, and you may want to start out by playing

music that is most familiar to you. Time the pieces so you know how long the music will take, and prepare an encore (just in case). Write your set list down with the pieces in the order in which you want to play them, and bring it with you to your performance. You can tape it to your instrument, put it on the floor; just place it somewhere you can easily see it.

Be prepared to say something about each piece, too—it could be something personal (why you love it, where you first heard it...) or factual ("I found this music yesterday in a dumpster in Omaha, Nebraska"). You want to be prepared to impart some information about each piece to give the audience some way to personalize the music they're hearing.

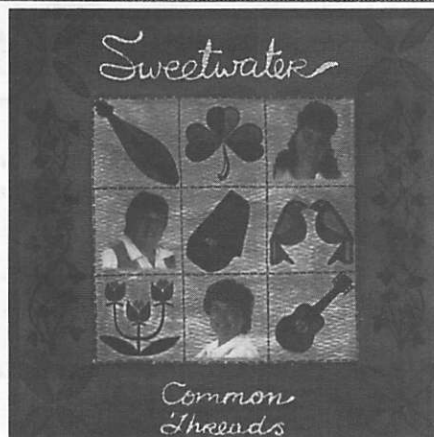
To arrange a performance, get on the phone and call places. Tell them you want to come and perform. Be prepared to answer a lot of questions about yourself and your music, and then set a date some time in the future so you can take

the time to fully prepare and get the help you need to carry it through.

Congratulate yourself on each step you take toward playing in public, and remember that with the right attitude, it gets better. You might want to keep a diary of each of your performances with all the background information about your audience and contact people, and also your set list and a brief description of your impressions. You can include a constructive critique of your performance, as well as writing about how you felt before, during, and after. It becomes a fascinating diary of your experience, and you can chart your progress over time, too.

In the next article, we'll discuss ways of preparing to perform (including dealing with adrenaline and performance anxiety). Please write to me with your experiences and ideas—Box 34, Congers, NY, 10920; email: HDPlayer@aol.com.. and break a leg, and stay in tune. 🎵

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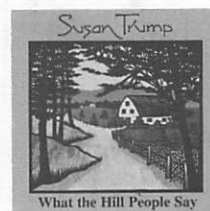
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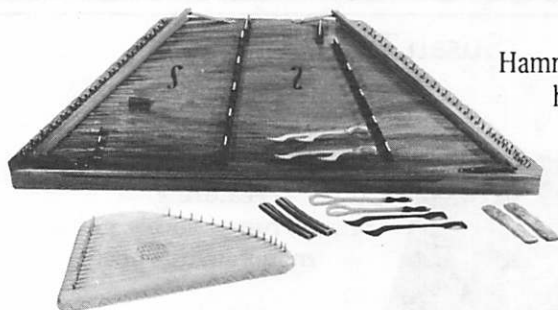
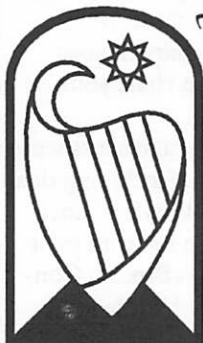
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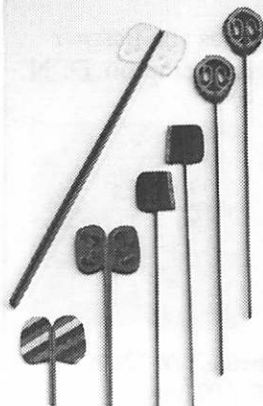


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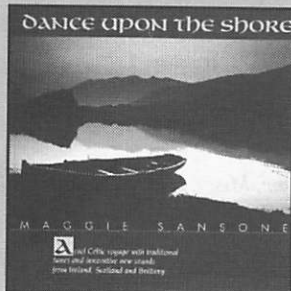


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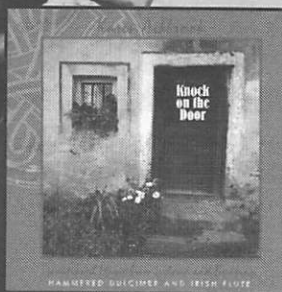
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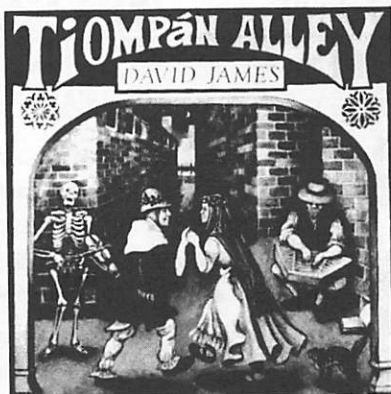
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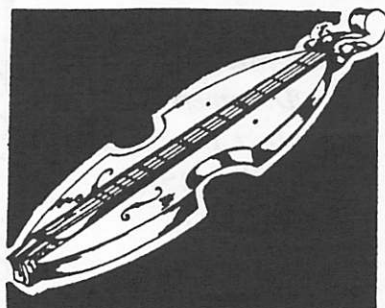
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# What makes a good ensemble piece?

by Les Scott  
Atlanta, Georgia

There is a real difference between playing together and playing in ensemble. When we play together—in a jam session, for instance—we play what we can, or if we are more experienced, what we want to play. Perhaps some of us might actually be able to play what we feel in a jam session, using ornaments and improvisation to dance around the tune. In a room full of dulcimers, there might be the playing of parts and other elements of ensemble playing, but until the participants become intentional about their playing together, until they hatch a full-blown plan, the halls of ensemble-hood may not be entered. Up until that time, they're just jammin'.

Below are some principles that I have found useful in the creation of interesting and beautiful ensemble pieces using the dulcimer. The same principles could apply to ensembles using dulcimers and other instruments or to non-dulcimer ensembles, but my concern here is primarily for dulcimers playing with dulcimers.

## Economy

This principle simply means wise use of resources. We want to use everything at our disposal to its fullest advantage to create an ensemble that is as interesting and as beautiful as we can make it. Accordingly, everyone in an ensemble should do something different; that is the most economical use of your ensemble's resources. The doubling of parts should be used only to solve problems of emphasis, volume, and balance. If, for example, the melody of the song is being drowned out by the other parts (or by other instruments louder than the dulcimer), doubling of parts will increase its volume and give it a more

prominent place in the mix. Otherwise, everyone in the ensemble should have a significant, unique, and indispensable part to play in the piece, no matter how simple or complex that part may be.

## Variety

Variety is the most valuable tool for increasing the level of interest for your audience. Jamming, as interesting and fun as it may be for participants, is not as interesting for outsiders who have to listen to the tune rendered many times in the same way. Since most tunes played by dulcimers are short and repetitive, the object here is to render the tune a different way with each repetition. To create an ensemble that shows a lot of variety, we might have one repetition played solo, one in which the tune is accompanied by crosspicked chords, one in which a harmony or counter-melody is played, one where the tune is played an octave higher, one where everyone plays the tune in a unique way with slightly different phrasing or ornamentation, etc. Every repetition doesn't have to be different from every other one, but every repetition should be different from the one that preceded it. You might have good reasons for repeating a particular rendering of the tune, but remember that a lot of variety is necessary to keep your audience interested in your playing.

## Arrangement

In the dulcimer world as a whole, the term "arrangement" is commonly used to refer to the way a particular person plays a tune. They usually write this information down in a tab and publish it, and then it becomes so-and-so's arrangement of (insert name of tune). In ensemble, the term is used in a slightly different way. To you and your partners, the arrangement is the way you arrange among yourselves to play

the tune—in other words, your overall plan. Among the many arrangement issues to be worked out, the most important and immediate will be to establish tonal levels where each ensemble member will play. In a four-member ensemble, one member might play the melody, one a parallel harmony, one might play chords in low fret-board positions, and one chords in high positions. In each case, an ensemble member is playing at a different tonal level. As the process of arrangement continues, you will have to work out a number of different arrangement problems. How will the piece begin and end? Will everyone start at once, or will the ensemble layer in the different parts? Will everyone end together with a big bang or will the piece gradually fade out? Does everyone play all together all through the ensemble, or will there be parts when one or more ensemble members drop out? How fast should the piece go? How can you work out tempo problems so that everyone can play the song together? What about dynamics? How loud or soft should each part of the piece be? Attention to these arranging issues adds depth, meaning, and interest to your ensemble playing.

## Unity

The individuality of each part—its tonal level, its function, and its unique task in the ensemble—must be created with some sort of attention to how it will fit in with the whole piece. For many ensemble members, this may mean giving up treasured tricks and playing styles when they don't fit in. For others this may mean pushing yourself to do things you have never attempted in order to make your part fit well. For many potential ensemblers, this may be the most difficult aspect of your ensemble involvement. If you play a piece one



way solo, you might have to change it when you play it in ensemble. If your rendition of a song fits poorly into an ensemble, it doesn't mean that you are playing it wrong. It just means you have to play it differently. Similarly, if it becomes evident that you must drop out for a repetition or two, it doesn't mean that you are being punished for playing badly. It just means that you are contributing to the overall development of the arrangement. Remember that in an ensemble there is no star—the unity of the piece is everything.

### Simplicity

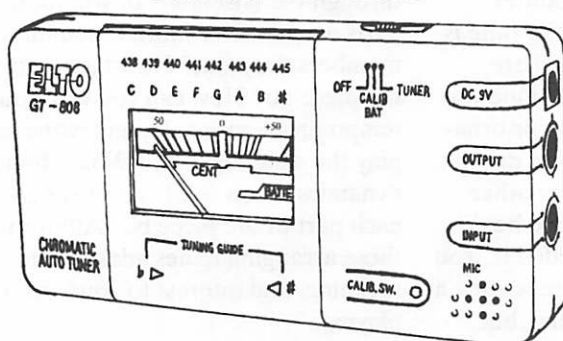
In a really good ensemble, each part has a clear, focused, and simple task to do. In one of my favorite ensemble arrangements written by Evelyn Miller, a rendering of Gordon Bok's exquisite "Julian of Norwich," one dulcimer plays the melody with harmonizing chords, one plays arpeggios and little runs that fill up rhythmic spaces in the melody, one imitates the regular rhythm of

church bells, and one plays the melody an octave higher with high harmonizing chords. In an arrangement of mine, "Four Leaf Clover Waltz," one dulcimer plays the melody and a parallel harmony, one plays a descending bass line and low harmonizing chords, and one plays a high descant with parallel harmony and lots of tremolo. In each arrangement, the various parts are not complete in and of themselves; they must be combined with the other parts before they make sense. Each part is simple by itself, but weaves together with the other parts to make something complex. This aspect of ensemble playing can be disturbing, particularly to folks who do a lot of heavy strumming or fast crosspicking. Very active playing styles can often make an ensemble sound muddy or busy, particularly if more than one person in the group likes them. It is just as important to learn how to play simple as it is to learn to play with lots of technique. Save your fancy stuff for the time when you have a solo.

As an afterword, let me warn new ensemble players that individual practice (did I say practice?) for ensemble sessions can be a frustrating experience if you are playing something other than the arrangement's tune. It is the tune that holds the entire ensemble together, so practicing your part alone without the tune will give you only limited results. Therefore, I recommend that everyone in the ensemble learns the tune whether they actually play it or not. If you know the tune, you can sing it to yourself when you practice your part. That way you can better understand how your part fits into the whole scheme.

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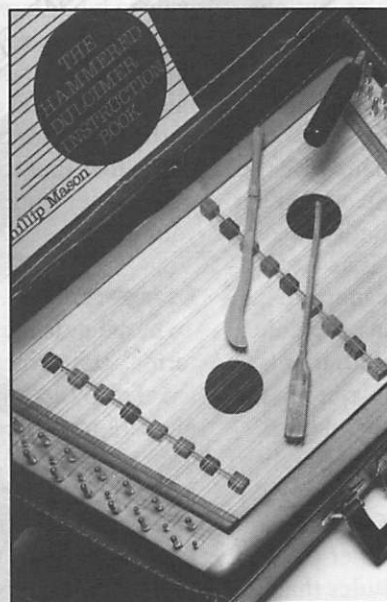
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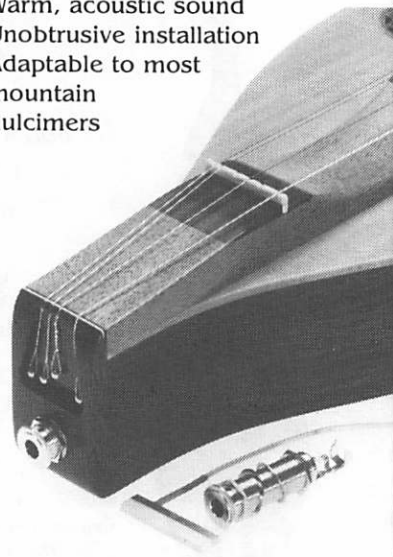
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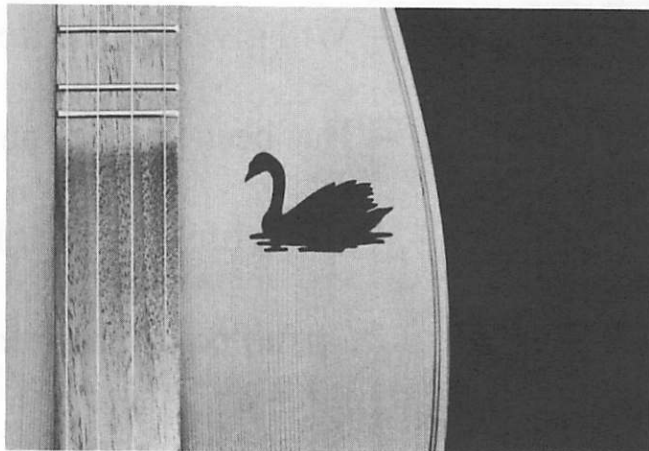
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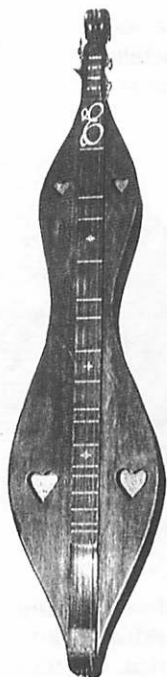
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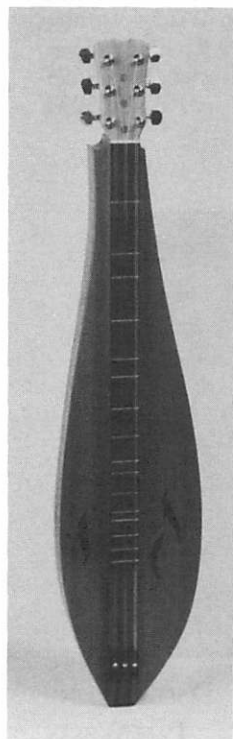
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**System 2:** Treble staff: A4 quarter, G4 quarter, F#4 quarter, E4 quarter, D4 quarter, C#4 quarter, B3 quarter, A3 quarter. Bass staff: 1-0-0-1-1-0-0-1-0-0-1-2-0-0-0-2-0-3-0-4-4-4.

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**System 4:** Treble staff: A4 quarter, G4 quarter, F#4 quarter, E4 quarter, D4 quarter, C#4 quarter, B3 quarter, A3 quarter. Bass staff: 9-8-9-10-9-7-8-8-8-8-8-9-10-8-6 1/2-4.

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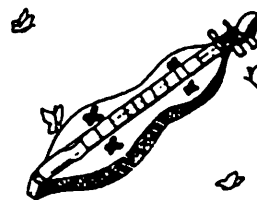
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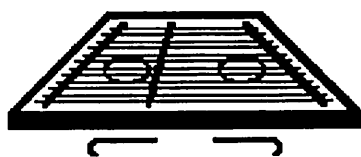


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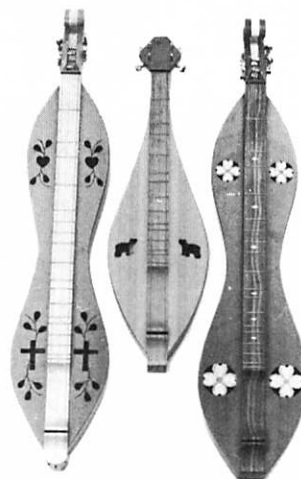
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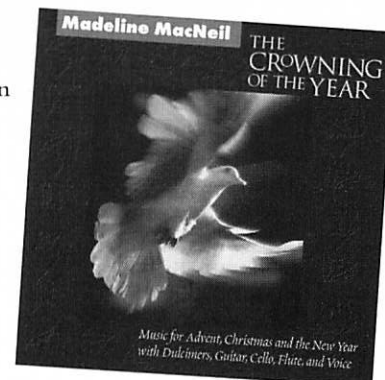
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